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JOSEPH RUSHBROOK;

OR,

THE POACHER.

VOL. II.

JOSEPH RUSHBROOK;

OR,

THE POACHER.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF PETER SIMPLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE POACHER.

CHAPTER I.

A VERY LONG CHAPTER, BUT IN WHICH OUR HERO OBTAINS EMPLOYMENT IN A VERY SHORT TIME.

THE preparatory establishment for young gentlemen to which our hero had been sent was situated on Clapham-rise. Joey did not think it prudent to walk in the direction of London; he therefore made a cut across the country, so as to bring him, before seven o'clock in the morning, not very far from Gravesend. The night had been calm and

beautiful, for it was in the month of August; and it had for some time been broad daylight when our hero, who had walked fifteen or sixteen miles, sat down to repose himself; and, as he remained quietly seated on the green turf on the wayside, he thought of his father and mother, of the kindness of the M'Shanes, and his own hard fate, until he became melancholy and wept; and, as the tears were rolling down his cheeks, a little girl, of about ten years old, very neatly dressed, and evidently above the lower ranks of life, came along the road, her footsteps so light as not to be perceived by Joey; she looked at him as she passed, and perceived that he was in tears, and her own bright, pretty face became clouded in a moment. Joey did not look up, and, after hesitating awhile, she passed on a few steps, and then she looked round, and observing that he was still weeping, she paused, turned round, and

came back to him; for a minute or two she stood before him, but Joey was unconscious of her presence, for he was now in the full tide of his grief, and, not having forgotten the precepts which had been carefully instilled into him, he thought of the God of Refuge, and he arose, fell on his knees, and prayed. The little girl, whose tears had already been summoned by pity and sympathy, dropped her basket, and knelt by his side—not that she prayed, for she knew not what the prayer was for, but from an instinctive feeling of respect towards the Deity which her new companion was addressing, and a feeling of kindness towards one who was evidently suffering. Joey lifted up his eyes, and beheld the child on her knees, the tears rolling down her cheeks; he hastily wiped his eyes, for, until that moment, he imagined that he had been alone; he had been praying on account of his loneliness—he

looked up, and he was not alone, but there was one by his side who pitied him, without knowing wherefore; he felt relieved by the sight. They both regained their feet at the same time, and Joey went up to the little girl, and, taking her by the hand, said, "Thank you."

"Why do you cry?" said the little girl.

"Because I am unhappy; I have no home," replied Joey.

"No home!" said the little girl; "it is boys who are in rags and starving, who have no home, not young gentlemen dressed as you are."

"But I have left my home," replied Joey.

"Then go back again—how glad they will be to see you!"

"Yes, indeed they would," replied Joey, "but I must not."

"You have not done any thing wrong, have you? No, I'm sure you have not—

you must be a good boy, or you would not have prayed."

"No, I have done nothing wrong, but I must not tell you any more."

Indeed, Joey was much more communicative with the little girl than he would have been with anybody else; but he had been surprised into it, and, moreover, he had no fear of being betrayed by such innocence. He now recollected himself, and changed the conversation.

"And where are you going to?" inquired he.

"I am going to school at Gravesend. I go there every morning, and stay till the evening. This is my dinner in my basket. Are you hungry?"

"No, not particularly."

"Are you going to Gravesend?"

"Yes," replied Joey. "What is your name?"

" Emma Phillips."

" Have you a father and mother?"

" I have no father; he was killed fighting, a little while after I was born."

" And your mother—?

"—Lives with grandmother, at that house you see there through the large trees.—And what are you going to do with yourself? Will you come home with me? and I'll tell my mother all you have told me, and she is very kind, and will write to your friends."

" No, no; you must not do that; I am going to seek for employment."

" Why, what can you do?"

" I hardly know," replied Joey; " but I can work, and am willing to work, so I hope I shall not starve."

With such conversation they continued their way, until the little girl said, " There is my school, so now I must wish you good bye."

"Good bye; I shall not forget you," replied Joey, "although we may never meet again." Tears stood in the eyes of our hero, as they reluctantly unclasped their hands and parted.

Joey, once more left alone, now meditated what was the best course for him to pursue. The little Emma's words, "Not young gentlemen dressed as you are," reminded him of the remarks and suspicions which must ensue if he did not alter his attire. This he resolved to do immediately; the only idea which had presented itself to his mind was, if possible, to find some means of getting back to Captain O'Donahue, who, he was sure, would receive him, if he satisfied him that it was not safe for him to remain in England; but, then, must he confess to him the truth or not? On this point our hero was not decided, so he put off the solution of it till another opportunity. A slop warehouse now attracted his attention;

he looked into the door after having examined the articles outside, and seeing that a sailor boy was bargaining for some clothes, he went in as if waiting to be served, but, in fact, more to ascertain the value of the articles which he wished to purchase. The sailor had cheapened a red frock and pair of blue trousers, and at last obtained them from the Jew for 14*s*. Joey argued that, as he was much smaller than the lad, he ought to pay less; he asked for the same articles, but the Jew, who had scanned in his own mind the suit of clothes which Joey had on, argued that he ought to pay more. Joey was, however, firm, and about to leave the shop, when the Jew called him back, and, after much haggling, Joey obtained the dress for 12*s*. Having paid for the clothes, Joey begged permission to be permitted to retire to the back shop and put them on, to ascertain if they fitted him, to which the Jew consented. A Jew asks no ques-

tions when a penny is to be turned; who Joey was, he cared little; his first object was to sell him the clothes, and having so done he hoped to make another penny by obtaining those of Joey at a moderate price. Perceiving that our hero was putting his own clothes, which he had taken off, into a bundle, the Jew asked him whether he would sell them, and Joey immediately agreed; but the price offered by the Jew was so small, that they were returned to the bundle, and once more was Joey leaving the shop, when the Jew at last offered to return to him the money he had paid for the sailor's dress, and take his own clothes in exchange, provided that Joey would also exchange his hat for one of tarpaulin, which would be more fitting to his present costume. To this our hero consented, and thus was the bargain concluded without Joey having parted with any of his small stock of ready money. No one who had only seen him

dressed as when he quitted the school, would have easily recognized Joey in his new attire. Joey sallied forth from the shop with his bundle under his arm, intending to look out for a breakfast, for he was very hungry. Turning his head right and left to discover some notice of where provender might be obtained, he observed the sailor lad, who had been in the shop when he went in, with his new purchase under his arm, looking very earnestly at some prints in a shop window; Joey ranged up alongside of him, and inquired of him where he could get something to eat; the lad turned round, stared, and, after a little while, cried, "Well, now, you're the young gentleman chap that came into the shop; I say, arn't you after a rig, eh? given them leg bail I'll swear. No consarn of mine, old fellow. Come along, I'll show you."

Joey walked by his new acquaintance a few yards, when the lad turned to him, "I say, did your master whop you much?"

"No," replied Joey.

"Well, then, that's more than I can say of mine, for he was at it all day. Hold out your right hand, now your left," continued he, mimicking; "My eyes! how it used to sting. I don't think I should mind it much now," continued the lad, turning up his hand; it's a little harder than it was then. Here's the shop, come in; if you haven't no money I'll give you a breakfast."

The lad took his seat on one side of a narrow table, Joey on the other, and his new acquaintance called for two pints of tea, a twopenny loaf, and two penny bits of cheese. The loaf was divided between them, and with their portion of cheese and pint of tea each, they made a good breakfast. As soon as it was over, the young sailor said to Joey, "Now what are you going arter; do you mean to ship?"

"I want employment," replied Joey; "and I don't much care what it is."

"Well, then, look you; I ran away from my friends and went to sea, and do you know I've only repented of it once, and that's ever since. Better do any thing than go to sea—winter coming on and all; besides, you don't look strong enough; you don't know what it is to be coasting in winter time; thrashed up to furl the top-gallant-sail, when it is so dark you can't see your way, and so cold that you can't feel your fingers, holding on for your life, and feeling as if life, after all, was not worth caring for; cold and misery aloft, kicks and thumps below. Don't you go to sea; if you do, after what I've told you, why then you're a greater fool than you look to be."

"I don't want to be a sailor," replied Joey, "but I must do something to get my living. You are very kind; will you tell me what to do?"

"Why, do you know, when I saw you come up to me, when I was looking at the

pictures, in your frock and trousers, you put me in mind, because you are so much like him, of a poor little boy who was drowned the other day alongside of an India ship; that's why I stared, for I thought you were he, at first."

"How was he drowned, poor fellow?" responded Joey.

"Why, you see, his aunt is a good old soul, who keeps a bumboat, and goes off to the shipping."

"What's a bumboat?"

"A boat full of soft tommy, soldiers, pipes and backey, rotten apples, stale pies, needles and threads, and a hundred other things; besides a fat old woman sitting in the stern sheets."

Joey stared; he did not know that "soft tommy" meant loaves of bread, or that "soldiers" was the term for red-herrings. He only thought that the boat must be very full.

"Now, you see that little Peter was her right-hand man, for she can't read and write. Can you? but of course you can."

"Yes, I can," replied Joey.

"Well, little Peter was holding on by the painter against a head sea, but his strength was not equal to it, and so when a swell took the boat he was pulled right overboard, and he was drowned."

"Was the painter drowned too?" inquired Joey.

"Ha! ha! that's capital; why the painter is a rope. Now, the old woman has been dreadfully put out, and does nothing but cry about little Peter, and not being able to keep her accounts. Now, you look very like him, and I think it very likely the old woman would take you in his place, if I went and talked her over; that's better than going to sea, for at all events you sleep dry and sound on shore every night, even if you

do have a wet jacket sometimes. What d'ye think?"

"I think you are very kind; and I should be glad to take the place."

"Well, she's a good old soul, and has a warm heart, and trusts them who have no money; too much, I'm afraid, for she loses a great deal. So now I'll go and speak to her, for she'll be alongside of us when I go on board; and where shall I find you when I come on shore in the evening?"

"Wherever you say, I will be."

"Well, then, meet me here at nine o'clock; that will make all certain. Come, I must be off now. I'll pay for the breakfast."

"I have money, I thank you," replied Joey.

"Then keep it, for it's more than I can do; and what's your name?"

"Joey."

"Well then, Joey, my hearty, if I get you

this berth, when we come in, and I am short, you must let me go on tick till I can pay."

"What's tick?"

"You'll soon find out what tick is, after you have been a week in the bumboat," replied the lad, laughing. "Nine o'clock, my hearty; good bye."

So saying, the young sailor caught up his new clothes, and hastened down to the beach.

The room was crowded with seamen and women, but they were too busy talking and laughing to pay any attention to Joey and his comrade. Our little hero sat some little time at the table after his new acquaintance had left, and then walked out into the street, telling the people of the house that he was coming back again, and requesting them to take care of his bundle.

"You'll find it here, my little fellow, all right when you ask for it," said the woman at the bar, who took it inside and put it away under the counter.

Joey went out with his mind more at ease. The nature of his new employment, should he succeed in obtaining it, he could scarcely comprehend, but still it appeared to him one that he could accomplish. He amused himself walking down the streets, watching the movements of the passers-by, the watermen in their wherries, and the people on board of the vessels which were lying off in the stream. It was a busy and animating sight. As he was lolling at the landing-place, a boat came on shore, which, from the description given by his young sailor friend, he was convinced was a bumboat; it had all the articles described by him, as well as many others, such as porter in bottles, a cask probably containing beer, leeks, onions, and many other heterogeneous matters; and, moreover, there was a fat woman seated in the stern.

The waterman shoved in with his boat-hook, and the wherry grounded. The fat

personage got out, and the waterman handed to her a basket, a long-book, and several other articles, which she appeared to consider indispensable; among others, a bundle which looked like dirty linen for the wash.

"Dear me! how shall I get up all these things?" exclaimed the woman; "and, William, you can't leave the boat, and there's nobody here to help me."

"I'll help you," said Joey, coming down the steps; "what shall I carry for you?"

"Well, you are a good, kind boy," replied she; "can you carry that bundle? I'll manage all the rest."

Joey tossed the bundle on his shoulder in a moment.

"Well, you are a strong little chap," said the waterman.

"He is a very nice little fellow, and a kind one. Now, come along, and I'll not forget you."

Joey followed with the bundle, until they arrived at a narrow door not eighty yards from the landing-place, and the woman asked him if he would carry it up stairs to the first-floor, which he did.

"Do you want me any more?" said Joey, setting down the bundle.

"No, dear, no; but I must give you something for your trouble. What do you expect?"

"Nothing at all," replied Joey; "and I shall not take any thing; you're very welcome; good bye;" and so saying, Joey walked down stairs, although the woman hallooed after him, and recommenced his peregrination in the streets of Gravesend; but he was soon tired of walking on the pavement, which was none of the best, and he then thought that he would go out into the country, and enjoy the green fields; so off he set, the same way that he came into the town,

passed by the school of little Emma, and trudged away on the road, stopping every now and then to examine what attracted his notice; watching a bird if it sang on the branch of a tree, and not moving lest he should frighten it away; at times sitting down by the road-side, and meditating on the past and the future. The day was closing in, and Joey was still amusing himself as every boy who has been confined in a school-room would do; he sauntered on until he came to the very spot where he had been crying, and had met with little Emma Phillips; and as he sat down again, he thought of her sweet little face and her kindness towards him — and there he remained some time till he was roused by some one singing as they went along the road. He looked up, and perceived it was the little girl, who was returning from school. Joey rose immediately, and walked towards her to meet her, but she did not appear to

recognize him, and would have passed him if he had not said, "Don't you know me?"

"Yes, I do now," replied she, smiling, "but I did not at first—you have put on another dress; I have been thinking of you all day—and, do you know, I've got a black mark for not saying my lesson," added the little girl with a sigh.

"And, then, it is my fault," replied Joey; "I'm very sorry."

"O, never mind; it is the first that I have had for a long while, and I shall tell mamma why. But you are dressed as a sailor-boy—are you going to sea?"

"No, I believe not—I hope to have employment in the town here, and then I shall be able to see you sometimes, when you come from school. May I walk with you as far as your own house?"

"Yes, I suppose so, if you like it."

Joey walked with her until they came to

the house, which was about two hundred yards farther.

"But," said Joey, hesitating, "you must make me a promise."

"What is that?"

"You must keep my secret. You must not tell your mother that you saw me first in what you called gentlemen's clothes—it might do me harm—and, indeed, it's not for my own sake I ask it. Don't say a word about my other clothes, or they may ask me questions which I must not answer, for it's not my secret. I told you more this morning than I would have told any one else—I did, indeed."

"Well," replied the little girl, after thinking a little, "I suppose I have no right to tell a secret, if I am begged not to do it, so I will say nothing about your clothes. But I must tell mother that I met you."

"O, yes; tell her you met me, and that I

was looking for some work, and all that, and to-morrow or next day I will let you know if I get any."

"Will you come in now?" said Emma.

"No, not now; I must see if I can get this employment promised for me, and then I shall see you again; if I should not see you again I shall not forget you, indeed I won't—Good bye."

Emma bade him adieu, and they separated, and Joey remained and watched her till she disappeared under the porch of the entrance.

Our hero returned towards Gravesend in rather a melancholy mood; there was something so unusual in his meeting with the little girl—something so uncommon in the sympathy expressed by her—that he felt pain at parting. But it was getting late, and it was time that he kept his appointment with his friend, the sailor-boy.

Joey remained at the door of the eating-

house for about a quarter of an hour, when he perceived the sailor-lad coming up the street. He went forward to meet him.

"O, here we are. Well, young fellow, I've seen the old woman, and had a long talk with her, and she won't believe there can be another in the world like her Peter, but I persuaded her to have a look at you, and she has consented; so come along, for I must be on board again in half an hour."

Joey followed his new friend down the street, until they came to the very door to which he had carried the bundle. The sailor-boy mounted the stairs, and turning into the room at the first landing, Joey beheld the woman whom he had assisted in the morning.

"Here he is, Mrs. Chopper, and if he won't suit you, I don't know who will," said the boy. "He's a regular scholar, and can sum up like winkin."

This character, given so gratuitously by his new acquaintance, made Joey stare, and the woman looked hard into Joey's face.

"Well, now," said she, "where have I seen you before? Dear me! and *he is* like poor Peter, as you said, Jem; I vow he is."

"I saw you before to-day," replied Joey, "for I carried a bundle up for you."

"And so you did, and would have no money for your trouble. Well, Jim, he is like poor Peter."

"I told you so, old lady; ay, and he'll just do for you as well as Peter did; but I'll leave you to settle matters, for I must be a-board."

So saying, the lad tipped a wink to Joey, the meaning of which our hero did not understand, and went down stairs.

"Well, now, it's very odd; but do you know you are like poor Peter, and the more I

look at you the more you are like him; poor Peter! did you hear how I lost him?"

"Yes, the sailor lad told me this morning."

"Poor fellow! he held on too fast, most people drown by not holding on fast enough; he was a good boy, and very smart indeed; and so it was you who helped me this morning when I missed poor Peter so much? Well, it showed you had a good heart, and I love that; and where did you meet with Jim Paterson?"

"I met him first in a slop-shop, as he calls it, when I was buying my clothes."

"Well, Jim's a wild one, but he has a good heart, and pays when he can. I've been told by those who know his parents, that he will have property by-and-by. Well, and what can you do? I am afraid you can't do all Peter did."

"I can keep your accounts, and I can be honest and true to you."

"Well, Peter could not do more; are you sure you can keep accounts, and sum up totals?"

"Yes, to be sure I can; try me."

"Well, then, I will; here is pen, ink, and paper. Well, you are the very image of Peter, and that's a fact. Now write down, beer, 8*d.*; tobacco, 4*d.*; is that down?"

"Yes."

"Let me see; duck for trousers, 3*s.* 6*d.*; beer again, 4*d.*; tobacco, 4*d.*; is that down? Well, then, say beer again, 8*d.* Now sum that all up."

Joey was perfect master of the task, and, as he handed over the paper, announced the whole sum to amount to 5*s.* 10*d.*

"Well," says Mrs. Chopper, "it looks all right, but just stay here a minute while I go and speak to somebody." Mrs. Chopper left the room, went down stairs, and took it to

the bar-girl at the next public-house to ascertain if it was all correct.

"Yes, quite correct, Mrs. Chopper," replied the lass.

"And is it as good as Peter's was, poor fellow?"

"Much better," replied the girl.

"Dear me! who would have thought it? and so like Peter too!"

Mrs. Chopper came up stairs again, and took her seat.—"Well," says she, "and now what is your name?"

"Joey."

"Joey what?"

"Joey—O'Donahue," replied our hero, for he was fearful of giving the name of M'Shane.

"And who are your parents?"

"They are poor people," replied Joey, "and live a long way off."

"And why did you leave them?"

Joey had already made up his mind to tell his former story; "I left there because I was accused of poaching, and they wished me to go away."

"Poaching; yes, I understand that—killing hares and birds. Well, but why did you poach?"

"Because father did."

"O, well, I see; then if you only did what your father did, we must not blame his child; and so you come down here to go to sea?"

"If I could not do better."

"But you shall do better, my good boy. I will try you instead of poor Peter, and if you are an honest and good careful boy, it will be much better than going to sea. Dear me! how like he is, but now I *must* call you Peter; it will make me think I have him with me, poor fellow!"

"If you please," said Joey, who was not sorry to exchange his name.

"Well, then, where do you sleep to-night?"

"I did intend to ask for a bed at the house where I left my bundle."

"Then don't do so; go for your bundle, and you shall sleep in Peter's bed (poor fellow, his last was a watery bed, as the papers say), and then to-morrow morning you can go off with me."

Joey accepted the offer, went back for his bundle, and returned to Mrs. Chopper in a quarter of an hour; she was then preparing her supper, which Joey was not sorry to partake of; after which, she led him into a small room, in which was a small bed without curtains; the room itself was hung round with strings of onions, papers of sweet herbs, and flitches of bacon; the floor was strewed with empty ginger-beer bottles, oakum in bags, and many other articles. Altogether, the smell was any thing but agreeable.

"Here is poor Peter's bed," said Mrs.

Chopper; "I changed his sheets the night before he was drowned, poor fellow! Can I trust you to put the candle out?"

"O, yes; I'll be very careful."

"Then, good night, boy. Do you ever say your prayers? poor Peter always did."

"Yes, I do," replied Joey; "good night."

Mrs. Chopper left the room. Joey threw open the window, for he was almost suffocated, undressed himself, put out the light, and, when he had said his prayers, his thoughts naturally reverted to the little Emma who had knelt with him on the road-side.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH OUR HERO GOES ON DUTY.

At five o'clock the next morning Joey was called up by Mrs. Chopper; the waterman was in attendance, and, with the aid of Joey, carried down the various articles into the boat. When all was ready, Mrs. Chopper and Joey sat down to their breakfast, which consisted of tea, bread and butter, and red herrings; and, as soon as it was finished, they embarked, and the boat shoved off.

"Well, Mrs. Chopper," said the waterman, "so I perceive you've got a new hand."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Chopper; "don't you think he's the moral of poor Peter?"

"Well, I don't know; but there is a something about the cut of his jib which reminds me of him, now you mention it. Peter was a good boy."

"Ay, that he was, and as sharp as a needle. You see," said Mrs. Chopper, turning to Joey, "sharp's the word in a bumboat. There's many who pay, and many who don't; some I trust, and some I don't—that is, those who won't pay me old debts. We lose a bit of money at times, but it all comes round in the end; but I lose more by not booking the things taken, than in any other way, for sailors do pay when they have the money—that is, if ever they come back again, poor fellows. Now, Peter."

"What? is his name Peter, too?"

"Yes; I must call him Peter, William; he is so like poor Peter."

"Well, that will suit me; I hate learning new names."

"Well, but Peter," continued Mrs. Chopper, "you must be very careful; for, you see, I'm often called away here and there, after wash clothes and such things, and then you must look out, and if they do take up any thing, why you must book it at all events. You'll learn by-and-by who to trust and who not to trust; for I know the most of my customers. You must not trust a woman—I mean any of the sailors' wives—unless I tell you, and you must be very sharp with them, for they play all manner of tricks; you must look two ways at once. Now, there's a girl on board the brig we are pulling to, called Nancy; why, she used to weather poor Peter, sharp as he was. She used to pretend to be very fond of him, and hug him close to her with one arm, so as to blind him, while she stole the tarts with the other: so don't admit her familiarities; if you do, I shall pay for them."

"Then, who am I to trust?"

"Bless the child! you'll soon find out that; but mind one thing—never trust a tall, lanky seaman, without his name's on the books; those chaps never pay. There's the book kept by poor Peter; and you see names upon the top of each score—at least, I believe so; I have no learning myself, but I've a good memory; I can't read nor write, and that's why Peter was so useful."

That Peter could read his own writing it is to be presumed; but certain it was that Joey could not make it out until after many days' examination, when he discovered that certain hieroglyphics were meant to represent certain articles; after which it became more easy.

They had now reached the side of the vessel, and the sailors came down into the boat, and took up several articles upon credit; Joey booked them very regularly.

"Has Bill been down yet?" said a soft voice from the gangway.

"No, Nancy, he has not."

"Then he wants two red herrings, a six-penny loaf, and some 'baccy."

Joey looked up, and beheld a very handsome, fair, blue-eyed girl, with a most roguish look, who was hanging over the side.

"Then he must come himself, Nancy," replied Mrs. Chopper, "for you know the last time you took up the things he said that you were never told to do so, and he would not pay for them."

"That's because the fool was jealous; I lost the tobacco, Mrs. Chopper, and he said I had given it to Dick Snapper."

"I can't help that; he must come himself."

"But he's away in the boat, and he told me to get the things for him. Who have you there? Not Peter; no, it's not Peter; but what a dear little boy."

"I told you so," said Mrs. Chopper to our hero; "now, if I wasn't in the boat, she would be down in it in a minute, and persuade you to let her have the things—and she never pays."

Joey looked up again, and, as he looked at Nancy, felt that it would be very unkind to refuse her.

"Now, what a hard-hearted old woman you are, Mrs Chopper. Bill will come on board; and, as sure as I stand here, he'll whack me. He will pay you, you may take my word for it."

"Your word, Nancy!" replied Mrs. Chopper, shaking her head.

"Stop a moment," said Nancy, coming down the side [illegible] very little regard as to showing her well-formed legs; "stop, Mrs. Chopper, and I'll explain to you."

"It's no use coming down, Nancy, I tell you," replied Mrs. Chopper.

" Well, we shall see," replied Nancy, taking her seat in the boat, and looking archly in Mrs. Chopper's face; " the fact is, Mrs. Chopper, you don't know what a good-tempered woman you are."

" I know, Nancy, what you are," replied Mrs. Chopper.

" O, so does everybody; I'm nobody's enemy but my own, they say."

" Ah! that's very true, child; more's the pity."

" Now, I didn't come down to wheedle you out of any thing, Mrs. Chopper, but merely to talk to you, and look at this pretty boy."

" There you go, Nancy; but an't he like Peter?"

" Well, and so he is! very like Peter; he has Peter's eyes and his nose, and his mouth is exactly Peter's—how very strange!"

" I never see'd such a likeness!" exclaimed Mrs. Chopper.

"No, indeed," replied Nancy, who, by agreeing with Mrs. Chopper in all she said, and praising Joey, and his likeness to Peter, at last quite came over the old bumboat woman; and Nancy quitted her boat with the two herrings, the loaf, and the paper of tobacco.

"Shall I put them down, Mrs. Chopper?" said Joey.

"Oh, dear!" replied Mrs. Chopper, coming to her recollection, "I'm afraid that it's no use; but put them down, any how; they will do for bad debts. Shove off, William, we must go to the large ship now."

"I do wish that that Nancy was at any other port," exclaimed Mrs. Chopper, as they quitted the vessel's side; "I do lose so much money by her."

"Well," said the waterman, laughing, "you're not the only one; she can wheedle man or woman, or, as they say, the devil to boot, if she would try."

During the whole of the day the wherry proceeded from ship to ship, supplying necessaries; in many instances they were paid for in ready-money, in others Joey's capabilities were required, and they were booked down against the customers. At last, about five o'clock in the evening, the beer barrel being empty, most of the contents of the baskets nearly exhausted, and the wherry loaded with the linen for the wash, biscuits, empty bottles, and various other articles of traffic or exchange, Mrs. Chopper ordered William, the waterman, to pull on shore to the landing place.

As soon as the baskets and other articles had been carried up to the house, Mrs. Chopper sent out for the dinner, which was regularly obtained from a cook's-shop. Joey sat down with her, and when his meal was finished, Mrs. Chopper told him he might take a run and stretch his legs a little if he pleased, while she tended to the linen which was to go

to the wash. Joey was not sorry to take advantage of this considerate permission, for his legs were quite cramped from sitting so long jammed up between baskets of eggs, red herrings, and the other commodities which had encompassed him.

We must now introduce Mrs. Chopper to the reader a little more ceremoniously. She was the widow of a boatswain who had set her up in the bumboat business, with some money he had acquired a short time before his death, and she had continued it ever since on her own account. People said that she was rich, but riches are comparative, and if a person in a seaport town, and in her situation, could show £200 or £300 at her banker's, she was considered rich. If she was rich in nothing else, she certainly was in bad and doubtful debts, having seven or eight books like that which Joey was filling up for her during the whole day, all containing accounts

of long standing, and most of which probably would stand for ever; but if the bad debts were many, the profits were in proportion; and what with the long-standing debts being occasionally paid, the ready-money she continually received, and the profitable traffic which she made in the way of exchange, &c., she appeared to do a thriving business, although it is certain the one-half of her goods were as much given away as were the articles obtained from her in the morning by Nancy.

It is a question whether these books of bad debts were not a source of enjoyment to her, for every night she would take one of the books down, and although she could not read, yet, by having them continually read to her, and knowing the pages so exactly, she could almost repeat every line by heart which the various bills contained; and then there was always a story which she had to tell

about each—something relative to the party of whom the transaction reminded her; and subsequently, when Joey was fairly domiciled with her, she would make him hand down one of the books, and talk away from it for hours; they were the ledgers of her reminiscences; the events of a considerable portion of her life were all entered down along with the 'baccy, porter, pipes, and red herrings; a bill for these articles was to her, time, place, and circumstance; and what with a good memory, and bad debts to assist it, many were the hours which were passed away (and pleasantly enough too, for one liked to talk and the other to listen) between Mrs. Chopper and our little hero. But we must not anticipate.

The permission given to Joey to stretch his legs induced him to set off as fast as he could to gain the high road before his little friend, Emma Phillips, had left her school. He

sat down in the same place, waiting for her coming. The spot had become hallowed to the poor fellow, for he had there met with a friend—with one who sympathized with him when he most required consolation. He now felt happy, for he was no longer in doubt about obtaining his livelihood, and his first wish was to impart the pleasing intelligence to his little friend. She was not long before she made her appearance, in her little straw bonnet with blue ribbons. Joey started up, and informed her that he had got a very nice place, explained to her what it was, and how he had been employed during the day.

"And I can very often come out about this time, I think," added Joey, "and then I can walk home with you, and see that you come to no harm."

"But," replied the little girl, "my mother says that she would like to see you, as she will not allow me to make acquaintance with

people I meet by accident. Don't you think that mother is right?"

"Yes, I do; she's very right," replied Joey; "I didn't think of that."

"Will you come and see her then?"

"Not now, because I am not very clean. I'll come on Sunday, if I can get leave."

They separated, and Joey returned back to the town. As he walked on, he thought he would spend the money he had got in a suit of Sunday clothes, of a better quality than those he had on, the materials of which were very coarse. On second thoughts he resolved to apply to Mrs. Chopper, as he did not exactly know where to go for them, and was afraid that he would be imposed upon."

"Well, Peter," said his new mistress, "do you feel better for your walk?"

"Yes, thank you, ma'am."

"Peter," continued Mrs. Chopper, "you appear to be a very handy, good boy, and I

hope we shall live together a long while. How long have you been at sea?"

"I was going to sea, I have never been to sea yet, and I don't want to go; I would rather stay with you."

"And so you shall, that's a settled thing. What clothes have you got, Peter?"

"I have none but what I stand in, and a few shirts in a bundle, and they are Sunday ones; but when I left home I had some money given me, and I wish to buy a suit of clothes for Sunday, to go to church in."

"That's a good boy, and so you shall; but how much money have you got?"

"Quite enough to buy a suit of clothes," replied Joey, handing out two sovereigns, and seventeen shillings in silver.

"O, I suppose they gave you all that to fit you out with when you left home; poor people, I dare say they worked hard for it. Well, I don't think the money will be of any

use to you; so you had better buy a Sunday suit, and I will take care you want for nothing afterwards. Don't you think I'm right?"

"Yes, I wish to do so. To-day is Tuesday, I may have them made by next Sunday."

"So you can; and as soon as William comes in, which he will soon, from the washerwoman's, we will go out and order them. Here he comes up the stairs—no, that foot's too light for his. Well it's Nancy, I declare! Why, Nancy, now," continued Mrs. Chopper, in a deprecating tone, "what do you want here?"

"Well, I leave you to guess," replied Nancy, looking very demurely, and taking a seat upon a hamper.

"Guess, I fear there's no guess in it, Nancy; but I will not—now it's no use—I will not trust another shilling."

"But I know you will, Mrs. Chopper. Lord love you, you're such a good-natured

creature, you can't refuse any one, and certainly not me. Why don't you take me in your boat with you, as your assistant? then there would be something in it worth looking at? I should bring you plenty of custom."

"You're too wild, Nancy, too wild, girl; but, now, what do you want? recollect you've already had some things to-day."

"I know I have, and you are a good-natured old trump, that you are. Now, I'll tell you—gold must pass between us this time."

"Mercy on me, Nancy, why you're mad. I've no gold—nothing but bad debts."

"Look you, Mrs. Chopper, look at this shabby old bonnet of mine. Don't I want a new one?"

"Then you must get somebody else to give you money, Nancy," replied Mrs. Chopper, coolly and decidedly.

"Don't talk so fast, Mrs. Chopper; now, I'll let you know how it is. When Bill came

on board he asked the captain for an advance; the captain refused him before, but this time he was in a good humour and he consented. So then I coaxed Bill out of a sovereign to buy a new bonnet, and he gave it me, and then I thought what a kind soul you were, and I resolved that I would bring you the sovereign, and go without the new bonnet; so here it is, take it quick, or I shall repent."

"Well, Nancy," said Mrs. Chopper, "you said right; gold has passed between us, and I am surprised. Now I shall trust you again."

"And so you ought, it's not every pretty girl like me, who will give up a new bonnet. Only look what a rubbishy affair this is," continued Nancy, giving her own a kick up in the air.

"I wish I had a sovereign to give away," said Joey to Mrs. Chopper; "I wish I had not said a word about the clothes."

"Do as you like with your own money, my dear," said the bumboat woman.

"Then, Nancy, I'll give you a sovereign to buy yourself a new bonnet with," said Joey, taking one out of his pocket and putting it into her hand.

Nancy looked at the sovereign, and then at Joey. "Bless the boy!" said she, at last, kissing him on the forehead; "he has a kind heart; may the world use him better than it has me! Here, take your sovereign, child; any bonnet's good enough for one like me." So saying, Nancy turned hastily away, and ran down stairs.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH MRS. CHOPPER READS HER LEDGER.

"Ah, poor girl," said Mrs. Chopper with a sigh, as Nancy disappeared. "You are a good boy, Peter; I like to see boys not too fond of money, and if she had taken it (and I wish she had, poor thing) I would have made it up to you."

"Is the man she calls Bill her husband?" inquired Joey.

"O, I know nothing about other people's husbands," replied Mrs. Chopper, hastily. "Now, then, let us go and order the clothes, and then you'll be able to go to church on Sunday; I will do without you."

"What, won't you go to church?"

"Bless you, child! who is to give the poor men their breakfast and their beer? A bum-boat woman can't go to church any more than a baker's man, for people must eat on a Sunday. Church, like every thing else in this world, appears to me only to be made for the rich; I always take my Bible in the boat with me on Sunday, but then I can't read it, so it's of no great use. No, dear, I can't go to church, but I can contrive, if it don't rain in the evening, to go to meeting and hear a little of the word; but you can go to church, dear."

A suit of blue cloth, made in sailor's fashion, having been ordered by Mrs. Chopper, she and Joey returned home; and, after their tea, Mrs. Chopper desired Joey to hand her one of the account books, which she put upon her knees and opened.

"There," said she, looking at the page,

"I know that account well; it was Tom Alsop's—a fine fellow he was, only he made such a bad marriage: his wife was a very fiend, and the poor fellow loved her, which was worse. One day he missed her, and found she was on board another vessel; and he came on shore distracted like, and got very tipsy, as sailors always do when they're in trouble, and he went down to the wharf, and his body was picked up next day."

"Did he drown himself?"

"Yes, so people think, Peter, and he owed me £1. 3s. 4d., if I recollect right. Arn't that the figure, Peter?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Joey, "that's the sum total of the account exactly."

"Poor fellow!" continued Mrs. Chopper, with a sigh, "he went to his long account without paying me my short one. Never mind; I wish he was alive and twice as much in my debt. There's another, I recol-

lect that well, Peter, for it's a proof that sailors are honest, and I do believe that, if they don't pay, it's more from thoughtlessness than any thing else; and then the women coax all their money from them, for sailors don't care for money when they do get it, and then those Jews are such shocking fellows; but look you, Peter, this is almost the first bill ran up after I took up the business; he was a nice fair-haired lad, from Shields, and the boy was cast away, and he was picked up by another vessel and brought here, and I let him have things, and lent him money to the amount of a matter of £20, and he said he would save all and pay me, and he sailed away again, and I never heard of him for nine years. I thought that he was drowned, or that he was not an honest lad; I didn't know which, and it was a deal of money to lose; but I gave it up; when one day a tall, stout fellow, with great red

whiskers, called upon me, and said, 'Do you know me?' 'No,' said I, half frightened; 'how should I know you? I never see'd you before.' 'Yes, you did,' says he, 'and here's a proof of it;' and he put down on the table a lot of money, and said, 'Now, missus, help yourself; better late than never. I'm Jim Sparling, who was cast away, and who you were as good as a mother to; but I've never been able to get leave to come to you since. I'm boatswain's-mate of a man-of-war, and have just received my pay, and now I've come to pay my debts.' He would make me take £5 more than his bill to buy a new silk gown, for his sake; poor fellow! he's dead now.—Here's another, that was run up by one of your tall, lanky sailors, who wear their knives in a sheath, and not with a lanyard round their waists; those fellows never pay, but they swear dreadfully. Let me see, what can this one be? Read it, Peter; how much is it?"

"*£4. 2s. 4d.*," replied our hero.

"Yes, yes, I recollect now, it was the Dutch skipper; there's murder in that bill, Peter; it was things I supplied to him just before he sailed, and an old man was passenger in the cabin; he was a very rich man, although he pretended to be poor; he was a diamond merchant, they say, and as soon as they were at sea, the Dutch captain murdered him in the night, and threw him overboard out of the cabin window; but one of the sailors saw the deed done, and the captain was taken up at Amsterdam and had his head cut off. The crew told us when the galliot came back with a new captain. So the Dutch skipper paid the forfeit of his crime; he paid my bill, too, that's certain. O, deary me," continued the old lady, turning to another page. "I shan't forget this in a hurry; I never see poor Nancy now without recollecting it. Look, Peter; I know the sum—

£8. 4*s*. 6*d*. exactly; it was the things taken up when Tom Freelove married Nancy; it was the wedding dinner and supper."

"What, Nancy who was here just now?"

"Yes, that Nancy, and a sweet modest young creature she was then, and had been well brought up too; she could read and write beautifully, and subscribed to a circulating library, they say. She was the daughter of a baker in this town. I recollect it well; such a fine day it was when they went to church, she looking so handsome in her new ribbons and smart dress, and he such a fine-looking young man. I never see'd such a handsome young couple; but he was a bad one, and so it all ended in misery."

"Tell me how," said Joey.

"I'll tell all you ought to know, boy; you are too young to be told all the wickedness of this world. Her husband treated her very ill; before he had been married a month,

he left her and went about with other people, and was always drunk, and she became jealous and distracted, and he beat her cruelly, and deserted her; and then, to comfort her, people would persuade her to keep her spirits up, and gave her something to drink, and by degrees she became fond of it. Her husband was killed by a fall from the mast head, and she loved him still, and took more to liquor, and that was her ruin. She don't drink now, because she don't feel as she used to do; she cares about nothing; she is much to be pitied, poor thing, for she is still young and very pretty. It's only four years ago when I saw her come out of church, and thought what a happy couple they would be."

"Where are her father and mother?"

"Both dead; don't let's talk about it any more; it's bad enough when a man drinks, but if a woman takes to it, it is all over with

her; but some people's feelings are so strong that they fly to it directly to drown care and misery. Put up the book, Peter; I can't look at it any more to-night; we'll go to bed."

Joey every day gave more satisfaction to his employer, and, upon his own responsibility, allowed his friend, the sailor-lad, to open an account as soon as his money was all gone. Finding that the vessel was going up the river to load, Joey determined to write a few lines to the M'Shanes, to allay the uneasiness which he knew his absence must have occasioned, Jim Paterson promising to put the letter in the post as soon as he arrived at London.

Our hero simply said, "My dear Sir, I am quite well, and have found employment, so pray do not grieve about me, as I never shall forget your kindness.—Joey M'Shane."

On the following Sunday Joey was dressed in his sailor's suit, and looked very well in it. He was not only a very good-looking but a gen-

tlemanlike boy in his manners. He went to church, and after church he walked out to the abode of his little friend, Emma Phillips. She ran out to meet him, was delighted with his new clothes, and took him by the hand to present him to her mother. Mrs. Phillips was a quiet-looking, pleasing woman, and the old lady was of a very venerable appearance. They made many inquiries about his friends, and Joey continued in the same story, that he and his father had been poachers, that he had been discovered and obliged to go away, and that he went with the consent of his parents. They were satisfied with his replies, and prepossessed in his favour; and as Joey was so patronised by her little daughter, he was desired to renew his visits, which he occasionally did on Sundays, but preferred meeting Emma on the road from school, and the two children (if Joey could be called a child) became very intimate, and felt annoyed if they did not

every day exchange a few words. Thus passed the first six months of Joey's new life; the winter was cold, and the water rough, and he blew his fingers, while Mrs. Chopper folded her arms up in her apron; but he had always a good dinner and a warm bed after the day's work was over. He became a great favourite with Mrs. Chopper, who at last admitted that he was much more useful than even Peter; and William, the waterman, declared that such was really the case, and that he was, in his opinion, worth two of the former Peter, who had come to such an untimely end.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE BITER IS BIT.

THE disappearance of Joey from the school was immediately communicated to M'Shane by the master, who could not imagine how such an incident could have occurred in such a decent establishment as his preparatory seminary; it was an epoch in his existence, and ever afterwards his chronology was founded upon it, and every thing that occurred was so many months or weeks before or after the absconding of young Master M'Shane. The letter had of course been produced, and as soon as the schoolmaster had taken his departure, M'Shane and his wife were in deep

council. "I recollect," said Mrs. M'Shane, who was crying in an easy chair—"I recollect now, that one day the boy came up and asked me the meaning of wilful murder, and I told him. And now I think of it, I do also remember the people at No. 1 table, close to the counter, some time ago, talking about a murder having been committed by a mere child, and a long report of it in the newspapers. I am sure, however (as Joey says in his letter), that he is not guilty."

"And so am I," replied M'Shane. "However, bring up the file of newspapers, dear, and let me look over them. How long back do you think it was?"

"Why, let me see; it was about the time you went away with Captain O'Donahue, I think, or a little before—that was in October."

M'Shane turned over the file of newspapers, and after a quarter of an hour's search found the report of the coroner's inquest.

"Here it is, my dear, sure enough," said M'Shane.

As soon as he had read it over, and came to the end, he said, "Yes; wilful murder against Joseph Rushbrook the younger, and £200 for his apprehension. This it was that drove the boy away from home, and not poaching, although I have no doubt that poaching was the cause of the murder. Now, my dear," continued M'Shane, "I think I can unravel all this; the murder has been committed, that's evident, by somebody, but not by Joey, I'll be sworn; he says that he is not guilty, and I believe him. Nevertheless, Joey runs away, and a verdict is found against him. My dear wife, I happen to know the father of Joey well; he was a fine, bold soldier, but one who would stick at nothing; and if I could venture an opinion, it is, that the murder was committed by Rushbrook, and not by the boy, and

that the boy has absconded to save his father."

The reader will acknowledge that M'Shane was very clear-sighted.

"That's my opinion," continued M'Shane. "How it has been managed to make the boy appear as the party, I cannot tell; but knowing the father, and knowing the son, I'd stake my commission that I've guessed at the truth."

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Mrs. M'Shane; "well, the Commandments say that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children. What can be done, M'Shane?"

"Nothing at present; it would injure Joey to raise a hue and cry after him; for, you see, if he is apprehended, he must either be tried for his life, and convicted himself, or prove that he did not do it, which probably he could not do without convicting his father; I will, however, make some inquiries about Rush-

brook himself, and if I can I will see him."

The same evening the schoolmaster again called upon M'Shane, to say that two persons had come to the school in the afternoon and asked to see him: that one of them, shabbily dressed, but evidently a person who was not of so low a class in life as the other, had accosted him when he came into the parlour with, "I believe I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Slappum; if so, may I request the favour to see my little friend Joey, whom I met yesterday walking out with the other young gentlemen under your care, as I have a message to him from his father and mother? The dear boy was once under my tuition, and did me much credit, as I have no doubt that he has done you."

Now, the usher had told Mr. Slappum that Joey had been addressed by this person the day before, and the schoolmaster presuming,

of course, that it was Joey M'Shane, replied —" I am sorry to say that he left this house last night, and has absconded we know not where. He left a letter for Major M'Shane, which I have this day delivered to him, acquainting him with the unpleasant circumstance."

" Bolted, by all that's clever!" said the second personage to the first, who looked very much surprised and confounded.

" You really have astonished me, my dear Sir," replied the first person, whom the reader will of course recognize to be Furness; " that a lad brought up by me in such strict moral principles, such correct notions of right and wrong, and, I may add, such pious feelings, should have taken such a step, is to me incomprehensible. Major M'Shane, I think you said, lives at ———?"

" Major M'Shane lives at No. — in Holborn," replied the schoolmaster.

"And the lad has not gone home to him?"

"No, he has not; he left a letter, which I took to Major M'Shane; but I did not break the seal, and am ignorant of its contents."

"I really am stupified with grief and vexation," replied Furness, "and will not intrude any longer. Bless the poor boy! what can have come of him?"

So saying, Furness took his departure with the peace-officer, whom he had intrusted with the warrant, which he had taken out to secure the person of our hero.

M'Shane heard the schoolmaster's account of this visit without interruption, and then said, "I have no doubt but that this person who has called upon you will pay me a visit; oblige me, therefore, by describing his person particularly, so that I may know him at first sight."

The schoolmaster gave a most accurate

description of Furness, and then took his leave.

As the eating-house kept by Mrs. M'Shane had a private door, Furness (who, as M'Shane had prophesied, came the next afternoon), after having read the name on the private door, which was not on the eating-house, which went by the name of the Chequers, imagined that it was an establishment apart, and thought it advisable to enter into it, and ascertain a little about Major M'Shane before he called upon him. Although M'Shane seldom made his appearance in the room appropriated for the dinners, it so happened that he was standing at the door when Furness entered and sat down in a box, calling for the bill of fare, and ordering a plate of beef and cabbage. M'Shane recognized him by the description given of him immediately, and resolved to make his acquaintance incog., and ascertain what his intentions were; he

therefore took his seat in the same box, and winking to one of the girls who attended, also called for a plate of beef and cabbage. Furness, who was anxious to pump any one he might fall in with, immediately entered into conversation with the Major.

"A good house this, Sir, and well attended apparently?"

"Yes, Sir," replied M'Shane; "it is considered a very good house."

"Do you frequent it much yourself?"

"Always, Sir; I feel much interested in its success," replied M'Shane; "for I know the lady who keeps it well, and have a high respect for her."

"I saw her as I passed by—a fine woman, Sir! Pray may I ask who is Major M'Shane, who I observe lives in the rooms above?"

"He is a major in the army, Sir—now on half-pay."

"Do you know him?"

"Remarkably well," replied M'Shane; "he's a countryman of mine."

"He's married, Sir, I think? I'll trouble you for the pepper."

"He is married, Sir, to a very amiable woman."

"Any family, Sir?"

"Not that I know of; they have a young *protégé*, I believe, now at school—a boy they call Joey."

"Indeed! how very kind of them; really, now, it's quite refreshing to me to see so much goodness of heart still remaining in this bad world. Adopted him, I presume?"

"I really cannot exactly say that; I know that they treat him as their own child."

"Have you seen Major M'Shane lately, Sir?"

"Saw him this morning, Sir, just after he got up."

"Indeed! This is remarkably good ale, Sir—will you honour me by tasting it?"

"Sir, you are very kind; but the fact is, I never drink malt liquor. Here, girl, bring a half-pint of brandy. I trust, Sir, you will not refuse to join me in a glass, although I cannot venture to accept your polite offer."

Furness drank off his pot of ale, and made ready for the brandy which had been offered him; M'Shane filled his own glass, and then handed the decanter over to Furness.

"I have the pleasure of drinking your good health, Sir," said M'Shane. "You are from the country, I presume; may I inquire from what part?"

"I am from Devonshire; I was formerly head of the Grammar School at ——; but, Sir, my principles would not allow me to retain my situation; rectitude of conduct, Sir, is absolutely necessary to the profession which inculcates morality and virtue, as well as in-

struction to youth, Sir. Here's to our better acquaintance, Sir."

"Sir, to yours; I honour your sentiments. By the powers! but you're right, Mr. —— I beg your pardon—but I don't catch your name exactly."

"Furness, Sir, at your service. Yes, Sir, the directors of the foundation which I presided over, I may say, with such credit to myself, and such advantage to the pupils under my care, wished to make a job—yes, Sir—of a charity; I could not consent to such deeds, and I resigned."

"And you have been in London ever since?"

"No, Sir; I repaired to the small village of Grassford, where I set up a school, but circumstances compelled me to resign, and I am now about to seek for employment in another hemisphere; in short, I have an idea of going out to New South Wales as a pre-

ceptor. I understand they are in great want of tuition in that quarter."

"I should think so," replied M'Shane; "and they have a great deal to unlearn as well as to learn."

"I speak of the junior branches—the scions or offsets, I may say—born in the colony, and who, I trust, will prove that crime is not hereditary."

"Well, I, wish you luck, Sir," replied M'Shane; "you must oblige me by taking another glass, for I never shall be able to finish this decanter myself."

"I gladly avail myself of the pleasure of your company, Sir."

As the reader is well aware that Furness was an intemperate man, it is not surprising that he accepted the offer; and before the second glass was finished, the ale and brandy had begun to have the effect, and he had become very communicative.

"What was the name of the village which you stated you had resided in lately, Sir?" inquired M'Shane.

"The village of Grassford."

"There is something I recollect about that village; let me see—something that I read in the newspapers. I remember now—it was the murder of a pedlar."

"Very true, Sir, such a circumstance did take place; it was a dreadful affair—and, what is more strange, committed by a mere child, who absconded."

"Indeed! What was his name?"

"Rushbrook, Sir; his father was a well-known poacher—a man who had been in the army, and had a pension for wounds. There is an old saying, Sir, of high authority—'Bring up a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it.' I instructed that boy, Sir; but, alas! what avails the in-

struction of a preceptor when a father leads a child into evil ways?"

"That's the truth, and no mistake," replied M'Shane. "So the boy ran away? Yes; I recollect now. And what became of the father?"

"The father, Sir, and mother have since left the village, and gone nobody knows where."

"Indeed! are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure, Sir; for I was most anxious to discover them, and took great pains, but without success."

"What did the people say thereabouts? Was there no suspicion of the father being implicated?"

"I do not think there was. He gave evidence at the inquest, and so did I, Sir, as you may suppose, most unwillingly; for the boy was a favourite of mine. I beg your pardon,

Sir—you say you are acquainted with Major M'Shane, and saw him this morning; is the interesting little boy you speak of as under his protection now at home or still at school?"

"I really cannot positively say," replied M'Shane; "but this is not holiday-time. Come, Sir, we must not part yet; your conversation is too interesting. You must allow me to call for some more brandy; poor as I am, I must treat myself and you too. I wish I knew where I could pick up a little money; for, to tell you the truth, cash begins to run low."

Furness was now more than half-drunk. "Well, Sir," said he, "I have known money picked up without any difficulty; for instance, now, suppose we should fall in with this young rascal who committed the murder; there is £200 offered for his apprehension and conviction."

"I thought as much," muttered M'Shane;

" the infernal scoundrel! I suspect that you will find him where you are going to, Mr. Furbish; he's got that far by this time."

" Between you and I, I think not, Sir. My name is Furness, Sir—I beg your pardon—not Furbish."

" Why, you do not think he would be such a fool as to remain in the country after such an act?"

" The wicked are foolish, Sir, as well as others," replied Furness, putting his finger to his nose, and looking very knowingly.

" That's truth, Sir. Help yourself; you drink nothing. Excuse me one minute; I'll be back directly."

M'Shane left the box for a few minutes to explain to his wife what he was about, and to give time for the liquor to operate upon Furness. As he expected, he found, on his return, that Furness had finished his glass, and was more tipsy than when he left him.

The conversation was renewed, and M'Shane again pleading his poverty, and his wish to obtain money, brought out the proposal of Furness, who informed him that he had recognized the *protégé* of Major M'Shane to be the identical Joseph Rushbrook; that the boy had absconded from the school, and was concealed in the house. He concluded by observing to M'Shane, that, as he was so intimate with the Major, it would be very easy for him to ascertain the fact, and offered him £50 as his share of the reward, if he would assist him in the boy's capture. It was lucky for Furness that M'Shane was surrounded by others, or in all probability there would have been another murder committed. The Major, however, said he would think of it, and fell back in deep thought; what he was thinking of was, what he should do to punish Furness. At last an idea came into his head; the rascal was drunk, and he pro-

posed that they should go to another house, where they might find the Major, and he would present him. Furness consented, and reeled out of the box; M'Shane, although he would as soon have touched a viper, controlled himself sufficiently to give Furness his arm, and leading him down by two or three back courts, he took him into an ale-house where there was a rendezvous for enlisting marines for the navy. As soon as they were seated, and had liquor before them, M'Shane spoke to the serjeant, tipped him a guinea, and said he had a good recruit for him, if he could be persuaded to enlist. He then introduced the serjeant as the Major, and advised Furness to pretend to agree with him in every thing. The serjeant told long stories, clapped Furness, who was now quite intoxicated, on the back, called him a jolly fellow, and asked him to enlist. "Say 'yes,' to please him," said M'Shane in his ear. Furness did so,

received the shilling, and when he came to his senses the next day, found his friend had disappeared, and that he was under an escort for Portsmouth. All remonstrances were unavailing; M'Shane had fee'd the serjeant, and had promised him a higher fee not to let Furness off; and the latter, having but a few shillings in his pocket, was compelled to submit to his fate.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH OUR HERO AGAIN FALLS IN WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

For nearly two years Joey had filled his situation as chancellor of the exchequer to Mrs. Chopper. He certainly did not feel himself always in the humour or the disposition for business, especially during the hard winter months, when, seated almost immovably in the boat during the best portion of the day, he would find his fingers so completely dead, that he could not hold his pen. But there is no situation, under any of the powers that be, that has not some drawback. People may say that a sinecure is one that

has not its disadvantages; but such is not the case—there is the disgrace of holding it. At all events, Joey's place was no sinecure, for he was up early, and was employed the whole of the day.

Nancy, the young woman we have introduced to our readers, had contracted a great regard for our hero, ever since his offering her his money, and Joey was equally partial to her, for she possessed a warm heart and much good feeling; she would very often run up stairs into Mrs. Chopper's room, to talk with the old lady and to see Joey, and would then take out her thimble and needle, examine his clothes, and make the necessary repairs.

"I saw you walking with little Emma Phillips, Peter," said Nancy; "where did you come to know her?"

"I met her in the road the day that I came down to Gravesend."

"Well, I'm sure! and do you speak to every young lady you chance to meet?"

"No; but I was unhappy, and she was very kind to me."

"She's a very sweet child, or rather, I can only say that she was, when I knew her."

"When did you know her?"

"Four or five years ago; I lived for a short time with Mrs. Phillips; that was when I was a good girl."

"Yes, indeed, Nancy," said Mrs. Chopper, shaking her head.

"Why aint you good, now, Nancy?" replied Joey.

"Because——" said Nancy.

"Because why?"

"Because I am not good," replied the girl; "and now, Peter, don't ask any more questions, or you'll make me cry. Heigho! I think crying very pleasant now and then; one's heart feels fresher, like flowers after the

rain. Peter, where are your father and mother?"

"I don't know; I left them at home."

"You left them at home! but do you never hear from them? do you never write?"

"No."

"But, why not? I am sure they have brought you up well. They must be very good people—are they not?"

Joey could not answer; how could he say that his father was a good man after what had passed?

"You don't answer me, Peter; don't you love your father and mother dearly?"

"Yes, indeed I do; but I must not write to them."

"Well, I must say there is something about Peter and his parents which I cannot understand, and which I have often tried to make him tell, and he will not," said Mrs. Chopper. "Poaching aint such a great

crime, especially in a boy. I can't see why he should not write to his father and mother, at all events. I hope, Peter, you have told me the truth?"

"I have told you what is true; but my father was a poacher, and they know it; and if they did not punish me, they would him, and transport him too, if I gave evidence against him, which I must do, if put to my oath; I've told you all I can tell; I must not tell of father, must I?"

"No, no, child; I dare say you are right," replied Mrs. Chopper.

"Now, I don't ask you to tell me, Peter," said Nancy, "for I can guess what has taken place; you and your father have been out poaching, there has been a scuffle with the keepers, and there has been blood shed; and that's the reason why you keep out of the way. Aint I right?"

"You are not far wrong," replied Joey; "but I will not say a word more upon it."

"And I won't ask you, my little Peter; there—that's done—and now I shall have a peep out of the window, for it's very close here, Mrs. Chopper."

Nancy threw the window open and leaned out of it, watching the passers-by. "Mercy on us! here's three soldiers coming up the street with a deserter handcuffed," cried she. Who can it be? he's a sailor. Why, I do believe it's Sam Oxenham, that belongs to the Thomas and Mary, of Sunderland. Poor fellow! Yes, it is him."

Joey went to the window, and took his stand by the side of Nancy.

"What soldiers are those?" inquired he.

"They're not soldiers after all," replied Nancy; "they are jollies—a sergeant and two privates."

"Jollies! what are they?"

" Why, marines, to be sure."

Joey continued looking at them until they passed under the window, when Nancy, who had a great disgust at any thing like arbitrary power, could not refrain from speaking.

" I say, master sergeant, you're a nice brave fellow, with your two jollies. D'ye think the young man will kill you all three, that you must put the darbies on so tight?"

At this appeal the sergeant and privates looked up at the window, and laughed when they saw such a pretty girl as Nancy. The eyes of one of the privates were, however, soon fixed on our hero's face, and deeply scrutinizing it, when Joey looked at him. As soon as Joey recognized him, he drew back from the window, pale as death, the private still remaining staring at the window.

" Why, what's the matter, Peter?" said Nancy; " what makes you look so pale? do you know that man?"

"Yes," replied Joey, drawing his breath, "and he knows me, I'm afraid."

"Why do you fear?" replied Nancy.

"See if he's gone," said Joey.

"Yes, he has; he has gone up the street with the sergeant; but every now and then he looks back at this window; but perhaps that's to see me."

"Why, Peter, what harm can that marine do you?" inquired Mrs. Chopper.

"A great deal; he will never be quiet until he has me taken up, and then what will become of my poor father?" continued Joey, with the tears running down his cheeks.

"Give me my bonnet, Peter. I'll soon find out what he is after," said Nancy, leaving the window. She threw her bonnet on her head, and ran down stairs.

Mrs. Chopper in vain endeavoured to console our hero, or make him explain—he did nothing but sit mournfully by her side, think-

ing what he had best do, and expecting every minute to hear the tramp of Furness (for it was he who had recognized Joey) coming up the stairs.

"Mrs. Chopper," at last said Joey, "I must leave you, I'm afraid; I was obliged to leave my former friends on this man's account."

"Leave me, boy! no, no, you must not leave me—how could I get on without you?"

"If I don't leave you myself, I shall be taken up, that is certain; but indeed I have not done wrong—don't think that I have."

"I'm sure of it, child; you've only to say so, and I'll believe you; but why should he care about you?"

"He lived in our village, and knows all about it; he gave evidence at—"

"At what, boy?"

"At the time that I ran away from home; he proved that I had the gun and bag which were found."

"Well, and suppose you had; what then?"

"Mrs. Chopper, there was a reward offered, and he wants to get the money."

"O, I see now—a reward offered; then it must be as Nancy said; there was blood shed;" and Mrs. Chopper put her apron up to her eyes.

Joey made no answer. After a few minutes' silence, he rose, and went to his room where he slept, and put his clothes up in a bundle. Having so done, he sat down on the side of his bed and reflected what was the course he ought to pursue.

Our hero was now sixteen, and much increased in stature; he was no longer a child, although, in heart, almost as innocent. His thoughts wandered—he yearned to see his father and mother, and reflected whether he might not venture back to the village, and meet them by stealth; he thought of the M'Shanes, and imagined that he might in the

same way return to them; then little Emma Phillips rose in his imagination, and his fear that he should never see her again; Captain O'Donahue was at last brought to his recollection, and he longed to be once more with him in Russia; and, lastly, he reviewed the happy and contented life he had lately led with his good friend Mrs. Chopper, and how sorry he should be to part with her. After a time he threw himself on his bed and hid his face in the pillow; and, overcome with the excess of his feelings, he at last fell fast asleep.

In the meantime Nancy had followed the marines up the street, and saw them enter, with their prisoner, into a small public-house, where she was well known; she followed them, spoke a few kind words to the seaman who had been apprehended, and with whom she was acquainted, and then sat down by Furness to attract his attention.

Furness had certainly much improved in

his appearance since he had (much against his will) been serving his Majesty. Being a tall man, he had, by drilling, become perfectly erect, and the punishment awarded to drunkenness, as well as the difficulty of procuring liquor, had kept him from his former intemperance, and his health had in consequence improved. He had been more than once brought up to the gangway upon his first embarkation, but latterly had conducted himself properly, and was in expectation of being made a corporal, for which situation his education certainly qualified him. On the whole, he was now a fine-looking marine, although just as unprincipled a scoundrel as ever.

"Well, my pretty lass, didn't I see you looking out of window, just now?"

"To be sure you did, and you might have heard me too," replied Nancy; "and when I saw such a handsome fellow as you, didn't I

put on my bonnet in a hurry, and come after you? What ship do you belong to?"

"The Mars, at the Nore."

"Well, I should like to go on board of a man-of-war. Will you take me?"

"To be sure I will; come, have a drink of beer."

"Here's to the jollies," said Nancy, putting the pewter pot to her lips. "When do you go on board again?"

"Not till to-morrow; we've caught our bird, and now we'll amuse ourselves a little. Do you belong to this place?"

"Yes, bred and born here; but we hardly ever see a man-of-war; they stay at the Nore, or go higher up."

Nancy did all she could to make Furness believe she had taken a fancy to him, and knew too well how to succeed. Before an hour had passed, Furness had, as he thought, made every arrangement with her, and con-

gratulated himself on his good fortune. In the meantime the beer and brandy went round, even the unfortunate captive was persuaded to drink with them, and drown reflection. At last Furness said to Nancy, "Who was that lad that was looking out of window with you? Was it your brother?"

"My brother! bless you, no. You mean that scamp Peter, who goes in the bumboat with old mother Chopper."

"Does he?—well I have either seen him before, or some one like him."

"He's not of our town," replied Nancy; "he came here about two years ago, nobody knows where from, and has been with Mrs. Chopper ever since."

"Two years ago," muttered Furness, "that's just the time. Come, girl, take some more beer."

Nancy drank a little and put down the pot.

"Where does Mrs. Chopper live?" inquired Furness.

"Where you saw me looking out of the window," replied Nancy.

"And the boy lives with her? I will call upon Mrs. Chopper by-and-by."

"Yes, to be sure he does; but why are you talking so about the boy? Why don't you talk to me, and tell me what a pretty girl I am, for I like to be told that."

Furness and his comrades continued the carouse, and were getting fast into a state of intoxication; the sergeant only was prudent; but Furness could not let pass this opportunity of indulging without fear of punishment. He became more loving towards Nancy as he became more tipsy; when Nancy, who cajoled him to the utmost of her power, again mentioned our hero; and then it was that Furness, who when inebriated could never hold a secret, first told her there was a

reward offered for his apprehension, and that if she would remain with him they would spend the money together. To this Nancy immediately consented, and offered to assist him as much as she could, as she had the entrance into Mrs. Chopper's house, and knew where the lad slept. But Nancy was determined to gain more from Furness, and as he was now pretty far gone, she proposed that they should take a walk out, for it was a beautiful evening. Furness gladly consented. Nancy again explained to him how she should manage to get Joey into her power, and appeared quite delighted at the idea of there being a reward, which they were to obtain; and finding that Furness was completely deceived, and that the fresh air had increased his inebriety, she then persuaded him to confide to her all the circumstances connected with the reward offered for our hero's apprehension. She then learned what had occurred at the

inquest—Joey's escape—his being again discovered by Furness—and his second escape from the school, to which he had been put by the M'Shanes.

"And his father and mother, where are they? When I think of them I must say that I do not much like to assist in taking up the boy. Poor people, how they will suffer when they hear of it! Really I don't know what to say," continued Nancy, biting the tip of her finger as if hesitating.

"Don't let them stop you," said Furness; "they will not be likely even to hear of it; they left the village before me, and no one knows where they are gone. I tried to find out, myself, but could not. It's very clear that they're gone to America."

"Indeed!" said Nancy, who had put the questions because she wished to give Joey some information relative to his parents; "gone to America, do you say?"

"Yes, I am inclined to think so, for I lost all trace of them."

"Well, then," replied Nancy, "that scruple of mine is got over."

She then pointed out to Furness the propriety of waiting an hour or two, till people were in bed, that there might be no chance of a rescue; and they returned to the public-house. Furness took another glass of ale, and then fell fast asleep on the bench, with his head over the table.

"So," thought Nancy, as she left the public-house, "the drunken fool makes sure of his £200; but there is no time to be lost."

Nancy hastened back to Mrs. Chopper, whom she found sitting with a candle, turning over the leaves of one of the old account-books.

"O Nancy, is that you? I was just sighing over you; here's the things that were

ordered for your wedding. Poor girl! I fear you have not often been to church since."

Nancy was silent for a short time. "I'm sick of my life and sick of myself, Mrs. Chopper; but what can I do?—a wretch like me! I wish I could run away, as poor Peter must directly, and go to where I never was known; I should be so happy."

"Peter must go, do you say, Nancy? is that certain?"

"Most certain, Mrs. Chopper, and he must be off directly. I have been with the marines, and the fellow has told me every thing; he is only waiting now for me to go back, to come and take him."

"But tell me, Nancy, has Peter been guilty?"

"I believe from my heart that he has done nothing; but still murder was committed, and Peter will be apprehended, unless you give

him the means of running away. Where is he now?"

"Asleep, fast asleep; I didn't like to wake him, poor fellow!"

"Then he must be innocent, Mrs. Chopper; they say the guilty never sleep. But what will he do—he has no money?"

"He has saved me a mint of money, and he shall not want it," replied Mrs. Chopper. "What shall I do without him? I can't bear to part with him."

"But you must, Mrs. Chopper; and, if you love him, you will give him the means, and let him be off directly. I wish I was going too," continued Nancy, bursting into tears.

"Go with him, Nancy, and look after him, and take care of my poor Peter," said Mrs. Chopper, whimpering; "go, my child, go, and lead a good life. I should better part with him, if I thought you were with him, and away from this horrid place."

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"Will you let me go with him, Mrs. Chopper—will you, indeed?" cried Nancy, falling on her knees. "Oh! I will watch him as a mother would her son, as a sister would her brother! Give us but the means to quit this place, and the good and the wicked both will bless you."

"That you shall have, my poor girl; it has often pained my heart to look at you; for I felt that you are too good for what you are, and you will be again a good, honest girl. You both shall go. Poor Peter! I wish I were young enough, I would go with you; but I can't. How I shall be cheated again when he is gone! but go he must. Here, Nancy, take the money; take all I have in the house;" and Mrs. Chopper put upwards of £20 into Nancy's hand as she was kneeling before her. Nancy fell forward with her face in the lap of the good old woman, suffocated with emotion and tears.

"Come, come, Nancy," said Mrs. Chopper, after a pause, and wiping her eyes with her apron, "you musn't take on so, my poor girl. Recollect poor Peter; there's no time to lose."

"That is true," replied Nancy, rising up. "Mrs. Chopper, you have done a deed this night for which you will have your reward in heaven. May the God of mercy bless you! and, as soon as I dare, night and morning will I pray for you."

Mrs. Chopper went into Joey's room with the candle in her hand, followed by Nancy. "See, how sound he sleeps!" said the old woman; "he is not guilty. Peter! Peter! come, get up, child."

Joey rose from his bed, confused at first with the light in his eyes, but soon recovered himself.

"Peter, you must go; my poor boy, and go quickly, Nancy says."

"I was sure of it," replied Joey, "I am very, very sorry to leave you, Mrs. Chopper. Pray think well of me, for, indeed, I have done nothing wrong."

"I am sure of it; but Nancy knows it all, and away you must go. I wish you were off; I'm getting fidgetty about it, although I cannot bear to lose you; so good bye at once, Peter, and God bless you! I hope we shall meet again yet."

"I hope so, indeed, Mrs. Chopper; for you have been very kind to me, as kind as a mother could be."

Mrs. Chopper hugged him to her breast, and then said, in a hurried tone, as she dropped on the bed, "There; go, go."

Nancy took up Joey's bundle in one hand and Joey by the other, and they went down stairs. As soon as they were in the street Nancy turned short round, went to the house where she usually slept, desiring Joey to wait

a moment at the door. She soon returned with her own bundle, and then, with a quick pace, walked on, desiring Joey to follow her. They proceeded in this manner until they were clear of the town, when Joey came up to Nancy, and said, "Thank you, Nancy; I suppose we'd better part now."

"No, we don't part yet, Peter," replied Nancy.

"But where are you going, and why have you that bundle?"

"I am going with you, Peter," replied Nancy.

"But, Nancy ——," replied Joey; and then after a pause: "I will do all I can for you—I will work for you—but I have no money, and I hope we shall not starve."

"Bless you, boy! bless you for that kind feeling! but we shall not starve; I have Mrs. Chopper's leave to go with you; indeed, she wished me so to do, and she has given me

money for you—it is for you, although she said for both."

"She is very kind; but why should you go with me, Nancy? You have nothing to fear."

"We must not talk now, Peter; let us walk on; I have more to fear than you."

"How is that? I fear being taken up for that of which I am not guilty, but you have nothing to fear."

"Peter, dear," replied Nancy, solemnly, "I do not fear for any thing the world can do to me—but don't talk now; let us go on."

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE BRINGS OUR HERO'S NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE.

When Nancy and our hero had proceeded about three miles on their way, Nancy slackened her pace, and they entered into conversation.

"Which way are you going?" demanded Joey.

"I'm cutting right across the country, Peter, or rather Joey, as I shall in future call you, for that is your real name—the marine told me it was Joseph Rushbrook; is it not?"

"Yes, it is," replied Joey.

"Then in future I shall call you so, for I do not want to hear even a name which would remind me of the scene of my misery; and Joey, do you never call me Nancy again, the name is odious to me; call me Mary."

"I will if you wish it; but I cannot imagine why you should run away from Gravesend, Mary. What do you mean to do? I ran away from fear of being taken up."

"And I, Joey, do more; I fly from the wrath to come. You ask me what I intend to do; I will answer you in the words of the catechism which I used once to repeat, 'to lead a new life, have a thankful remembrance of Christ's death, and be in charity with all men.' I shall seek for service; I care not how humble—it will be good enough. I will sift cinders for brick-making, make bricks, do any thing, as long as what I do is honest."

"I am very glad to hear you say that,

Mary," replied Joey, "for I was always very fond of you."

"Yes, Joey, and you were the first who offered to do a kind thing for me for a long while; I have never forgotten it, and this night I have done something to repay it."

Nancy then entered into a detail of all that had passed between her and Furness, of which Joey had been ignorant, and which proved to him what a narrow escape he had had.

"I little thought you had done all this while I slept," replied Joey; but I am very grateful, Mary."

"I know you are, so say no more about it. You see, Joey, he gave me all your history, and appears to believe that you committed the murder. I do not believe it; I do not believe you would do such a thing, although your gun might have gone off by accident."

"No, Mary, I did not do it, either on purpose or by accident; but you must ask me

no more questions, for if I were put on my trial I should not reveal the secret."

"Then I will never speak to you any more about it, if I can help it. I have my own thoughts on the business, but now I drop it. It is nearly day-light, and we have walked a good many miles; I shall not be sorry to sit down and rest myself."

"Do you know how far we have to go before we come to any town, Mary?"

"We are not far from Maidstone; it is on our right, but it will be as well not to go through so large a town so near to Gravesend. Besides, some of the soldiers may know me. As soon as we come to a good place, where we can find a drink of water, we will sit down and rest ourselves."

About a mile further on they came to a small rivulet, which crossed the road.

"This will do, Joey," said Nancy; "now we'll sit down."

It was then day-light; they took their seats on their bundles as soon as they had drank from the stream.

"Now, Joey," said Mary (as we shall call her for the future), "let us see what money we have. Mrs. Chopper put all she had in my hands; poor, good old woman, bless her! Count it, Joey, it is yours."

"No, Mary, she gave it for both of us."

"Never mind; do you keep it; for you see, Joey, it might happen that you might have to run off at a moment's warning, and it would not do for you to be without money."

"If I was to run off at a minute's warning, I should then take it all with me, and it would not do for you to be left without any money, Mary; so we must halve it between us, although we will always make one purse."

"Well, be it so; for if you were robbed, or I were robbed, on the way, the other might escape."

They then divided the money, Joey putting his share into his pocket, and tying it in with a string. Mary dropped hers down into the usual deposit of women for bank notes and billets-doux. As soon as this matter had been arranged, Mary opened her bundle, and took out a handkerchief, which she put on her shoulders; combed out the ringlets which she had worn, and dressed her hair flat on her temples; removed the gay ribbons from her bonnet, and substituted some plain brown in their stead.

"There," says she; "now, Joey, don't I look more respectable?"

"You do look more neat and more ——"

"—More modest, you would say, Joey. Well, and I hope in future to become what I look. But I look more fit to be your sister, Joey, for I have been thinking we had better pass off as brother and sister to avoid questioning. We must make out some story to agree in. Who shall we say that we are (as

we dare not say who we really are)? I am looking out for service, and so are you, that's very clear; father and mother are both dead; father was a baker. That's all true, as far as relates to me: and as you are my brother, why you must take my father and mother. It's no very great story after all."

"But it won't do to say we came from Gravesend."

"No; we need not say that, and yet tell no story; the village we passed through last night was Wrotham, so we came from thence."

"But where do you think of going, Mary?"

"A good way farther off yet; at all events, before we look out for service, we will get into another county. Now, if you are ready, we will go on, Joey, and look out for some breakfast, and then I shall be able to change my gown for a quieter one."

In half an hour they arrived at a village,

and went into a public-house. Mary went up stairs and changed her dress; and now that she had completed her arrangements, she looked a very pretty, modest young woman, and none could have supposed that the day before she had been flaunting in the street of a seafaring town. Inquiries were made, as might be supposed, and Mary replied that she was going to service, and that her brother was escorting her. They had their breakfast, and, after resting two hours, they proceeded on their journey.

For some days they travelled more deliberately, until they found themselves in the village of Manstone, in Dorsetshire, where they, as usual, put up at an humble public-house. Here Mary told a different story; she had been disappointed in a situation, and they intended to go back to their native town.

The landlady of the hotel was prepossessed

in favour of such a very pretty girl as Mary, as well as with the appearance of Joey, who, although in his sailor's dress, was very superior in carriage and manners to a boy in his supposed station in life, and she said, that if they would remain there a few days, she would try to procure them some situation. The third day after their arrival she informed Mary that she had heard of a situation as under-housemaid at the squire's, about a mile off, if she would like to take it, and Mary gladly consented. Mrs. Derborough sent up word, and received orders for Mary to make her appearance, and Mary accordingly went up to the hall, accompanied by Joey. When she arrived there, and made known her business, she was desired to wait in the servants'-hall until she was sent for. In about a quarter of an hour she was summoned, and, leaving Joey in the hall, she went up to see the lady of the house, who inquired whether she had

ever been out at service before, and if she had a good character.

Mary replied that she had never been out at service, and that she had no character at all (which, by-the-bye, was very true).

The lady of the house smiled at this apparently *naïve* answer from so very modest-looking and pretty a girl, and asked who her parents were.

To this question Mary's answer was ready, and she further added, that she had left home in search of a place, and had been disappointed; that her father and mother were dead, but her brother was down below, and had escorted her; and that Mrs. Chopper was an old friend of her mother's, and could answer as to her character.

The lady was prepossessed by Mary's appearance, by the report of Mrs. Derborough, and by the respectability of her brother travelling with her, and agreed to try her; but

at the same time said she must have Mrs. Chopper's address, that she might write to her; but, the place being vacant, she might come to-morrow morning; her wages were named and immediately accepted, and thus did Mary obtain her situation.

People say you cannot be too particular when you choose servants; and, to a certain degree, this is true; but this extreme caution, however selfishness and prudence may dictate it, is but too often the cause of servants, who have committed an error and have in consequence been refused a character, being driven to destitution and misery, when they had a full intention, and would have, had they been permitted, redeemed their transgression.

Mary was resolved to be a good and honest girl. Had the lady of the house been very particular, and had others to whom she might afterwards have applied been the same, all her good intentions might have been frus-

trated, and she might have been driven to despair, if not to her former evil courses. It is perhaps fortunate that everybody in the world is not so particular as your very good people, and that there is an occasional loop-hole by which those who have erred are permitted to return to virtue. Mary left the room delighted with her success, and went down to Joey in the servants'-hall. The servants soon found out from Mary that she was coming to the house, and one of the men chucked her under the chin and told her she was a very pretty girl. Mary drew back, and Joey immediately resented the liberty, stating that he would not allow any man to insult his sister; for Joey was wise enough to see that he could not do a better thing to serve Mary. The servant was insolent in return and threatened to chastise Joey, and ordered him to leave the house. The women took our hero's part. The house-keeper came

down at the time, and, hearing the cause of the dispute, was angry with the footman; the butler took the side of the footman; and the end of it was, that the voices were at the highest pitch, when the bell rang, and the men being obliged to answer it, the women were for the time left in possession of the field.

"What is that noise below?" inquired the master of the house.

"It is a boy, Sir—the brother, I believe, of the girl who has come as under-housemaid, who has been making a disturbance."

"Desire him to leave the house instantly."

"Yes, Sir," replied the butler, who went down to enforce the order.

Little did the master of the house imagine that in giving that order he was turning out of the house his own son; for the squire was no other than Mr. Austin. Little did the inconsolable Mrs. Austin fancy that her dear,

lamented boy was at that moment under the same roof with her, and being driven out of it by her menials; but such was the case. So Joey and Mary quitted the hall, and bent their way back to the village-inn.

"Well, Mary," said Joey, "I am very glad that you have found a situation."

"And so I am very thankful indeed, Joey," replied she, "and only hope that you will be able to get one somewhere about here also, and then we may occasionally see something of one another."

"No, Mary," replied Joey, "I shall not look for a situation about here; the only reason I had for wishing it was, that I might see you; but that will be impossible now."

"Why so?"

"Do you think that I will ever put my foot into that house again, after the manner I was treated to-day? Never."

"I was afraid so," replied Mary, mournfully.

"No, Mary. I am happy that you are provided for; I can seek my own fortune, and I will write to you and let you know what I do; and you will write to me, Mary, won't you?"

"It will be the greatest pleasure that will be left to me, Joey; for I love you as dearly as if you were my own brother."

The next day our hero and Mary parted with many tears on her side, and much sorrow on his. Joey refused to take more of the money than what he had in his possession, but promised, in case of need, to apply to Mary, who said that she would hoard up every thing for him, and she kept her word. Joey, having escorted Mary to the hall-lodge, remained at the inn till the next morning, and then set off once more on his travels.

Our hero started at break of day, and had walked, by a western road, from Manstone, about six miles, when he met two men coming

towards him. They were most miserably clad, neither of them had shoes or stockings; one had only a waistcoat and a pair of trousers, with a sack on his back; the other had a pair of blue trousers, torn to ribbons, a Guernsey frock, and a tarpaulin hat; they appeared what they represented themselves to be, when they demanded charity—two wrecked seamen, who were travelling to a northern port to obtain employment; but had these fellows been questioned by a sailor, he would soon have discovered, by their total ignorance of any thing nautical, that they were impostors. Perhaps there is no plan more successful than this, which is now carried on to an enormous extent by a set of rogues and depredators, who occasionally request charity, but too often extort it, and add to their spoils by robbing and plundering every thing in their way. It is impossible for people in this country to ascertain the truth of

the assertions of these vagabonds, and it appears unfeeling to refuse assistance to a poor seaman who has lost his all; even the cottager offers his mite, and thus do they levy upon the public to an extent which is scarcely credible; but it should be known that, in all cases of shipwreck, sailors are now invariably relieved and decently clothed, and supplied with the means of travelling to obtain employment; and, whenever a man appeals for charity in a half-naked state, he is invariably an impostor or a worthless scoundrel.

The two men were talking loud, and laughing when they approached our hero. As soon as they came near, they looked hard at him, and stopped right before him, so as to block up the footpath.

"Hilloah, my little sailor! where are you bound to?" said one to Joey, who had his common sailor's dress on.

"And, I say, what have you got in that

bundle?" said the other; "and how are you off for brads? haven't you something to spare for brother seamen? Come, feel in your pockets; or shall I feel for you?"

Joey did not much like this exordium; he replied, stepping into the road at the same time—"I've no money, and the bundle contains my clothes."

"Come, come," said the first, "you're not going to get off that way; if you don't wish your brains beaten out, you'll just hand over that bundle for me to examine;" and so saying, the man stepped into the road towards Joey, who continued to retreat to the opposite side.

There was no footpath at the side of the road to which Joey retreated, but a very thick quick-set hedge, much too strong for any man to force his way through. Joey perceived this, and as the man came at him to seize his bundle, he contrived, by a great

effort, to swing it over the hedge into the field on the other side. The man, exasperated at this measure on the part of our hero, ran to seize him; but Joey dodged under him, and ran away down the road for a few yards, where he picked up a heavy stone for his defence, and there remained, prepared to defend himself, and not lose his bundle if he could help it.

"You get hold of him, Bill, while I go round for the bundle," said the man who had followed across the road, and he immediately set off to find the gate, or some entrance into the field, while the other man made after Joey. Our hero retreated at full speed; the man followed, but could not keep pace with our hero, as the road was newly gravelled, and he had no shoes. Joey, perceiving this, slackened his pace, and when the man was close to him, turned short round, and aiming the stone with great precision, hit him on the

forehead, and the fellow fell down senseless. In the meantime, the other miscreant had taken the road in the opposite direction to look for the gate, and Joey, now rid of his assailant, perceived, that in the hedge opposite to the part of the road where he now stood, there was a gap which he could get through. He scrambled into the field, and ran for his bundle; the other man, who had been delayed, the gate being locked, and fenced with thorns, had but just gained the field when Joey had his bundle in possession. Our hero caught it up, and ran like lightning to the gap; tossed over his bundle, and followed it, while the man was still a hundred yards from him. Once more in the high road, Joey took to his heels, and having run about two hundred yards, he looked back to ascertain if he was pursued, and perceived the man standing over his comrade, who was lying where he had fallen. Satisfied that he

was now safe, Joey pursued his journey at a less rapid rate, although he continued to look back every minute, just by way of precaution; but the fellows, although they would not lose an opportunity of what appeared such an easy robbery, had their own reasons for continuing their journey, and getting away from that part of the country.

Our hero pursued his way for two miles, looking out for some water by the wayside to quench his thirst, when he observed in the distance that there was something lying on the roadside. As he came nearer he made it out to be a man prostrate on the grass, apparently asleep, and a few yards from where the man lay was a knife-grinder's wheel, and a few other articles in the use of a travelling tinker; a fire nearly extinct was throwing up a tiny column of smoke, and a saucepan, which appeared to have been upset, was lying beside it. There was something in the scene before

him which created a suspicion in the mind of our hero that all was not right, so, instead of passing on, he walked right up to where the man lay, and soon discovered that his face and dress were bloody. Joey knelt down by the side of him, and found that he was senseless, but breathing heavily. Joey untied the handkerchief which was round his neck, and which was apparently very tight, and almost immediately afterwards the man appeared relieved and opened his eyes. After a little time he contrived to utter one word—"Water!" and Joey, taking up the empty saucepan, proceeded in search of it. He soon found some and brought it back. The tinker had greatly recovered during his absence, and as soon as he had drank the water, sat upright.

"Don't leave me, boy," said the tinker; "I feel very faint."

"I will stay by you as long as I can be of

any use to you," replied Joey; "what has happened?"

"Robbed and almost murdered!" replied the man, with a groan.

"Was it by those two rascals without shoes and stockings, who attempted to rob me?" inquired Joey.

"Yes; the same, I've no doubt. I must lie down for a time, my head is so bad," replied the man, dropping back upon the grass.

In a few minutes the exhausted man fell asleep, and Joey remained sitting by his side for nearly two hours. At last, his new companion awoke, raised himself up, and, dipping his handkerchief into the saucepan of water, washed the blood from his head and face.

"This might have been worse, my little fellow," said he to Joey, after he had wiped his face; "one of these rascals nearly throttled me, he pulled my handkerchief so tight.

Well, this is a wicked world, this, to take away a fellow-creature's life for thirteen-pence halfpenny, for that was all the money they found in my pocket. I thought an itinerant tinker was safe from highway robbery, at all events. Did you not say that they attacked you, or did I dream it?"

"I did say so; it was no dream."

"And how did a little midge like you escape?"

Joey gave the tinker a detail of what had occurred.

"Cleverly done, boy, and kindly done now to come to my help, and to remain by me. I was going down the road, and as you have come down, I presume we are going the same way," replied the tinker.

"Do you feel strong enough to walk now?"

"Yes, I think I can; but there's the grindstone."

"O, I'll wheel that for you."

"Do, that's a good boy, for I tremble very much, and it would be too heavy for me now."

Joey fixed his bundle with the saucepan, &c., upon the knife-grinder's wheel, and rolled it along the road, followed by the tinker, until they came to a small hamlet, about two miles from the spot from which they had started; they halted when they were fifty yards from the first cottage, and the tinker, having selected a dry place under the hedge, said, "I must stop here a little while."

Joey, who had heard the tinker say that the men had robbed him of thirteen-pence halfpenny, imagined that he was destitute, and as he wished to proceed on his way, he took out two shillings, and held them out to the man, saying, "This will keep you till you can earn some more. Good-bye now; I must go on."

The tinker looked at Joey. "You're a kind-hearted lad, at all events, and a clever, bold one, if I mistake not," said he; "put up your money, nevertheless, for I do not want any. I have plenty, if they had only known where to look for it."

Joey was examining his new companion during the time that he was speaking to him. There was a free and independent bearing about the man, and a refinement of manner and speech very different from what might be expected from one in so humble a situation. The tinker perceived this scrutiny, and, after meeting our hero's glance, said, "Well, what are you thinking of now?"

"I was thinking that you have not always been a tinker."

"And I fancy that you have not always been a sailor, my young master: but, however, oblige me by going into the village and getting some breakfast for us. I will pay

you the money when you return, and then we can talk a little."

Joey went into the village, and finding a small chandler's-shop, bought some bread and cheese, and a large mug which held a quart of beer, both of which he also purchased, and then went back to the tinker. As soon as they had made their breakfast, Joey rose up and said—"I must go on now; I hope you'll find yourself better to-morrow."

"Are you in a very great hurry, my lad?" inquired the tinker.

"I want to find some employment," replied Joey; "and, therefore, I must look for it."

"Tell me what employment you want. What can yo do?"

"I don't exactly know; I have been keeping accounts for a person."

"Then you are a scholar, and not a seafaring person?"

"I am not a sailor, if you mean that; but I have been on the river."

"Well, if you wish to get employment, as I know this country well and a great many people, I think I may help you. At all events, a few days can make no difference; for you see, my boy, to-morrow I shall be able to work, and then, I'll answer for it, I'll find meat and drink for both of us; so, what do you say? Suppose you stay with me, and we'll travel together for a few days, and when I have found work that will suit you, then we can part?"

"I will, if you wish it;" replied Joey.

"Then that's agreed," said the tinker; "I should like to do you a good turn before we part, and I hope I shall be able; at all events, if you stay with me a little while I will learn you a trade which will serve you when all others fail."

"What, to mend kettles and to grind knives?"

"Exactly; and, depend upon it, if you would be sure of gaining your livelihood, you will choose a profession which will not depend upon the caprice of others, or upon patronage. Kettles, my boy, will wear out, knives will get blunt, and therefore, for a good trade, give me, 'kettles to mend, knives to grind.' I've tried many trades, and there is none that suits me so well. And now that we've had our breakfast, we may just as well look out for lodgings for the night, for I suppose you would not like the heavens for your canopy, which I very often prefer. Now, put yourself to the wheel, and I'll try my old quarters."

The knife-grinder walked into the village, followed by Joey, who rolled the wheel, until they stopped at a cottage, where he was immediately recognized and welcomed: Joey was ordered to put the wheel under a shed, and then followed the tinker into the cottage.

The latter told his story, which created a good deal of surprise and indignation, and then complained of his head and retired to lie down, while Joey amused himself with the children. They ate and slept there that night, the people refusing to take any thing for their reception. The next day the tinker was quite recovered, and having mended a kettle and ground three or four knives for his hostess, he set off again, followed by Joey, who rolled the wheel.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE SCIENCE OF TINKERING AND THE ART OF WRITING DESPATCHES.

THEY had proceeded about two miles when the tinker said—"Come, my lad, let us sit down now, and rest ourselves a bit, for it is past noon, and you must be tired with shoving that wheel along; I would have taken it from you before this, but the fact is, I'm rather stiff yet about the head and shoulders; I feel it more than I thought I should; here's a nice spot; I like to sit down under a tree, not too well covered with leaves, like this ash; I like to see the sunshine playing here and there upon the green grass, shifting its spots, as the

leaves are rustled by the wind. Now, let us lie down here, and not care a fig for the world. I am a philosopher; do you know that!"

"I don't exactly know what it means; a very clever, good man—is it not?"

"Well, not exactly; a man may be a philosopher without being very good, or without being very clever. A philosopher is a man who never frets about any thing, cares about nothing, is contented with a little, and don't envy any one who appears better off than himself; at least that is my school of philosophy. You stare, boy, to hear a tinker talk in this way—I perceive that; but, you must know that I am a tinker by choice; and I have tried many other professions before, all of which have disgusted me."

"What other professions have you been?"

"I have been—let me see—I almost forget; but I'll begin at the beginning. My

father was a gentleman, and, until I was fourteen years old, I was a gentleman, or the son of one; then he died, and that profession was over, for he left nothing; my mother married again, and left me; she left me at school, and the master kept me there for a year, in hopes of being paid; but, hearing nothing of my mother, and not knowing what to do with me, he at last (for he was a kind man) installed me as under usher of the school; for, you see, my education had been good, and I was well qualified for the situation, as far as capability went; it was rather a bathos, though, to sink from a gentleman's son to an under usher; but I was not a philosopher at that time. I handed the toast to the master and mistress, the head ushers and parlour boarders, but was not allowed any myself; I taught Latin and Greek, and English Grammar, to the little boys, who made faces at me, and put crooked pins on the bottom of my chair; I

walked at the head of the string when they went out for an airing, and walked up stairs the last when it was time to go to bed. I had all the drudgery, and none of the comforts; I was up first, and held answerable for all deficiencies; I had to examine all their nasty little trousers, and hold weekly conversation with the botcher, as to the possibility of repairs; to run out if a hen cackled, that the boys should not get the egg; to wipe the noses of my mistress's children, and carry them if they roared; to pay for all broken glass, if I could not discover the culprit; to account for all bad smells, for all noise, and for all ink spilled; to make all the pens, and to keep one hundred boys silent and attentive at church: for all which, with deductions, I received £40 a-year, and found my own washing. I stayed two years, during which time I contrived to save about £6; and with that, one fine morning, I set off on my travels,

fully satisfied that, come what would, I could not change for the worse."

"Then you were about in the position that I'm in now," said Joey, laughing.

"Yes, thereabouts; only a little older, I should imagine. I set off with good hopes, but soon found that nobody wanted educated people—they were a complete drug. At last I obtained a situation as waiter, at a posting house on the road, where I ran along all day long to the tinkling of bells, with hot brandy-and-water ever under my nose; I answered all the bells, but the head-waiter took all the money. However, I made acquaintances there; and at last obtained a situation as clerk to a corn-chandler, where I kept the books; but he failed, and then I was handed over to the miller, and covered with flour for the whole time I was in his service. I stayed there till I had an offer from a coal-merchant (that was going from white to black); but, however, it

was a better place. Then, by mere chance, I obtained the situation of clerk on board of a fourteen-gun brig, and cruised in the Channel for six months; but, as I found that there was no chance of being a purser, and as I hated the confinement and discipline of a man-of-war, I cut and run as soon as I obtained my pay. Then I was shopman at a draper's, which was abominable, for if the customers would not buy the goods, I got all the blame; besides, I had to clean my master's boots and my mistress's shoes, and dine in the kitchen on scraps, with a slip-shod, squinting girl, who made love to me. Then I was a warehouseman; but they soon tacked on to it the office of light porter, and I had to carry weights enough to break my back. At last I obtained a situation as foreman, in a tinman and cutler's shop, and by being constantly sent into the work-shop I learnt something of the trade; I had made

up my mind not to remain much longer, and I paid attention, receiving now and then a lesson from the workmen, till I found that I could do very well; for, you see, it's a very simple sort of business, after all."

"But still a travelling tinker is not so respectable as being in any of the situations you were in before," replied Joey.

"There I must beg your pardon, my good lad; I had often serious thoughts upon the subject, and I argued as follows:—What is the best profession in this world of ours?—That of a gentleman; for a gentleman does not work, he has liberty to go where he pleases, he is not controlled, and is his own master. Many a man considers himself a gentleman who has not the indispensables that must complete the profession. A clerk in the Treasury, or public offices, considers himself a gentleman; and so he is by birth, but not by *profession;* for he is not his own

master, but is as much tied down to his desk as the clerk in a banker's counting-house, or in shop. A gentleman by profession must be his own master, and independent; and how few there are in this world who can say so! Soldiers and sailors are obliged to obey orders, and therefore I do not put them down as perfect gentlemen, according to my ideas of what a gentleman should be. I doubt whether the Prime Minister can be considered a gentleman until after he is turned out of office. Do you understand me, boy?"

"O, yes, I understand what you mean by a gentleman; I recollect reading a story of a negro who came to this country, and who said that the pig was the only gentleman in the country, for he was the only living being who did not work."

"The negro was not far wrong," resumed the tinker. "Well, after thinking a long while, I came to the decision that, as I could

not be a perfect gentleman, I would be the nearest thing to it that was possible; and I considered that the most enviable situation was that of a travelling tinker. I learned enough of the trade, saved money to purchase a knife-grinder's wheel, and here I have been in this capacity for nearly ten years."

"And do you hold to the opinion that you formed?"

"I do; for, look you, work I must; therefore, the only question was, to take up the work that was lightest and paid best; I know no trade where you can gain so much with so little capital and so little labour. Then, I am not controlled by any living being; I have my liberty and independence; I go where I please, stop where I please, work when I please, and idle when I please; and never know what it is to want a night's lodging. Show me any other profession which can say the same! I might

be better clothed—I might be considered more respectable; but I am a philosopher, and despise all that; I earn as much as I want, and do very little work for it. I can grind knives and scissors and mend kettles enough in one day to provide for a whole week; for instance, I can grind a knife in two minutes, for which I receive twopence. Now, allowing that I work twelve hours in the day, at the rate of one penny per minute, I should earn £3 per day, which, deducting Sundays, is £939 a-year. Put that against £40 a-year, as a drudge to a school, or confined to a desk in a shop, or any other profession, and you see how lucrative mine is in proportion. Then I am under no control; not ordered here or there, like a general or admiral; not attacked in the House of Commons or Lords, like a prime minister; on the contrary, half a day's work out of the seven is all I require; and I therefore assert that

my profession is nearer to that of a gentleman than any other that I know of."

"It may be as you style it, but you don't look much like one," replied Joey, laughing.

"That's prejudice; my clothes keep me as warm as if they were of the best materials, and quite new. I enjoy my victuals quite as much as a well-dressed gentleman does—perhaps more; I can indulge in my own thoughts; I have leisure to read all my favourite authors, and can afford to purchase new books. Besides, as I must work a little, it is pleasant to feel that I am always in request and respected by those who employ me."

"Respected! on what account?"

"Because I am always wanted, and therefore always welcome. It is the little things of this life which annoy, not the great; and a kettle that won't hold water, or a knife that won't cut, are always objects of execration;

and as people heap their anathemas upon the kettle and the knife, so do they long for my return, and when I come they are glad to see me, glad to pay me, and glad to find that their knives are sharp, and their kettles, thrown on one side, are useful again, at a trifling charge. I add to people's comforts; I become necessary to every poor person in the cottages; and therefore they like me and respect me. And, indeed, if it is only considered how many oaths and execrations are used when a person is hacking and sawing away with a knife which will not cut, and how by my wheel I do away with the cause of crime, I think that a travelling tinker may be considered, as to his moral influence upon society, more important than any parson in his pulpit. You observe that I have not rendered the profession degrading by marriage, as many do."

"How do you mean?"

"I hold that, whatever may be the means of a gentleman, he must be considered to lose the most precious advantage appertaining to his profession when he marries; for he loses his liberty, and can no longer be said to be under no control. It is very well for other professions to marry, as the world must be peopled; but a gentleman never should. It is true he may contrive to leave his clog at home, but then he pays dear for a useless and galling appendage; but, in my situation as a travelling tinker, I could not have done so; I must have dragged my clog after me through the mud and mire, and have had a very different reception than what I have at present."

"Why so?"

"Why, a man may stroll about the country by himself—find lodging and entertainment for himself; but not so if he had a wife in rags, and two or three dirty children at his heels. A single man, in every stage of so

ciety, if he pays his own way, more easily finds admission than a married one—that is, because the women regulate it; and although they will receive him as a tinker, they invariably object to his wife, who is considered and stigmatised as the tinker's trull. No, that would not do—a wife would detract from my respectability, and add very much to my cares."

"But have you no home, then, anywhere?"

"Why, yes, I have, like all single men on the *pavé*, as the French say—just a sort of 'chambers' to keep my property in, which will accumulate in spite of me."

"Where are they?"

"In Dudstone, to which place I am now going. I have a room for £6 a-year; and the woman in the house takes charge of every thing during my absence. And now, my boy, what is your name?"

"Joey Atherton," replied our hero, who

had made up his mind to take the surname of his adopted sister, Nancy.

"Well, Joey, do you agree with me that my profession is a good one, and are you willing to learn it? if so, I will teach you."

"I shall be very glad to learn it, because it may one day be useful; but I am not sure that I should like to follow it."

"You will probably change your opinion; at all events, give it a fair trial. In a month or so you will have the theory of it by heart, and then we will come to the practice."

"How do you mean?"

"It's of no use your attempting any thing till you're well grounded in the theory of the art, which you will gain by using your eyes. All you have to do at first is to look on; watch me when I grind a knife or a pair of scissors; be attentive when you see me soldering a pot, or putting a patch upon a kettle; see how I turn my hand when I'm grinding,

how I beat out the iron when I mend; and learn how to heat the tools when I solder. In a month you will know how things are to be done in theory, and after that we shall come to the practice. One only thing, in the way of practice, must you enter upon at once, and that is turning the wheel with your foot; for you must learn to do it so mechanically, that you are not aware that you are doing it, otherwise you cannot devote your whole attention to the scissors or knife in your hand."

"And do you really like your present life, then, wandering about from place to place?"

"To be sure I do. I am my own master; go where I like; stop where I like; pay no taxes or rates; I still retain all the gentleman except the dress, which I can resume when I please. Besides, mine is a philanthropic profession; I go about doing good, and I've the means of resenting an affront like a despot."

"As how?"

"Why, you see, we travellers never interfere in each other's beats; mine is a circuit of many miles of country, and at the rate I travel it is somewhat about three months until I am at the same place again; they must wait for me if they want their jobs done, for they cannot get any one else. In one village they played me a trick one Saturday night when all the men were at the ale-house, and the consequence was, I cut the village for a year; and there never was such a village full of old kettles and blunt knives in consequence. However, they sent me a deputation, hoping I would forget what had passed, and I pardoned them."

"What is your name?" inquired Joey.

"Augustus Spikeman. My father was Augustus Spikeman, Esq.; I was Master Augustus Spikeman, and now I'm Spikeman, the tinker; so now we'll go on again. I have

nearly come to the end of my beat; in two days we shall be at Dudstone, where I have my room, and where we shall probably remain for some days before we start again."

In the afternoon they arrived at a small hamlet, where they supped and slept. Spikeman was very busy till noon grinding and repairing; they then continued their journey, and on the second day, having waited outside the town till it was dusk, Spikeman left his wheel in the charge of the landlord of a small ale-house, to whom he appeared well known, then walked with Joey to the house in which he had a room, and led him up stairs to his apartments.

When our hero entered the chamber of Spikeman, he was very much surprised to find it was spacious, light, and airy, and very clean. A large bed was in one corner; a sofa, mahogany table, chest of drawers, and chairs, composed the furniture; there was a

good-sized looking-glass over the chimney-piece, and several shelves of books round the room. Desiring Joey to sit down and take a book, Spikeman rang for water, shaved off his beard, which had grown nearly half an inch long, washed himself, and then put on clean linen, and a very neat suit of clothes. When he was completely dressed, Joey could hardly believe that it was the same person. Upon Joey expressing his astonishment, Spikeman replied, "You see, my lad, there is no one in this town who knows what my real profession is. I always go out and return at dusk, and the travelling tinker is not recognized; not that I care for it so much, only other people do, and I respect their prejudices. They know that I am in the ironmongery line, and that is all; so I always make it a rule to enjoy myself after my circuit, and live like a gentleman till part of my money is gone, and then I set out again. I am ac-

quainted with a good many highly respectable people in this town, and that is the reason why I said I could be of service to you. Have you any better clothes?"

"Yes; much better."

"Then dress yourself in them, and keep those you wear for our travels."

Joey did as he was requested, and Spikeman then proposed that they should make a call at a friend's, where he would introduce our hero as his nephew. They set off, and soon came to the front of a neat-looking house, at the door of which Spikeman rapped. The door was opened by one of the daughters of the house, who, on seeing him, cried out, "Dear me, Mr. Spikeman, is this you? Why, where have you been all this while?"

"About the country for orders, Miss Amelia;" replied Spikeman; "business must be attended to."

"Well, come in; mother will be glad to

see you," replied the girl, at the same time opening the door of the sitting-room for them to enter.

"Mr. Spikeman, as I live!" exclaimed another girl, jumping up, and seizing his hand.

"Well, Mr. Spikeman, it's an age since we have seen you," said the mother, "so now sit down and tell us all the news; and, Ophelia, my love, get tea ready; and who is it you have with you, Mr. Spikeman?"

"My little nephew, madam; he is about to enter into the mysteries of the cutlery trade."

"Indeed! well, I suppose, as you are looking out for a successor, you soon intend to retire from business and take a wife, Mr. Spikeman?"

"Why, I suppose it will be my fate one of these days," replied Spikeman; "but

that's an affair that requires some consideration."

"Very true, Mr. Spikeman, it is a serious affair," replied the old lady; "and I can assure you that neither my Ophelia nor Amelia should marry a man, with my consent, without I was convinced the gentleman considered it a very serious affair. It makes or mars a man, as the saying is."

"Well, Miss Ophelia, have you read all the books I lent you the last time I was here?"

"Yes, that they have, both of them," replied the old lady; they are so fond of poetry."

"But we've often wished that you were here to read to us," replied Miss Amelia, "you do read so beautifully; will you read to us after tea?"

"Certainly, with much pleasure."

Miss Ophelia now entered with the tea-tray;

she and her sister then went into the kitchen to make some toast, and to see to the kettle boiling, while Mr. Spikeman continued in conversation with the mother. Mrs. James was the widow of a draper in the town, who had, at his death, left her sufficient to live quietly and respectably with her daughters, who were both very good, amiable girls; and, it must be acknowledged, neither of them unwilling to listen to the addresses of Mr. Spikeman, had he been so inclined; but they began to think that Mr. Spikeman was not a marrying man, which, as the reader must know by this time, was the fact.

The evening passed very pleasantly. Mr. Spikeman took a volume of poetry, and, as Miss Ophelia had said, he did read very beautifully: so much so, that Joey was in admiration, for he had never yet known the power produced by good reading. At ten o'clock they took their leave, and returned to Spikeman's domicile.

As soon as they were up stairs, and candles lighted, Spikeman sat down on the sofa. "You see, Joey," said he, "that it is necessary not to mention the knife-grinder's wheel, as it would make a difference in my reception. All gentlemen do not gain their livelihood as honestly as I do; but, still, prejudices are not to be overcome. You did me a kind act, and I wished to return it; I could not do so without letting you into this little secret, but I have seen enough of you to think you can be trusted."

"I should hope so," replied Joey; "I have learnt caution, young as I am."

"That I have perceived already, and therefore I have said enough on the subject. I have but one bed, and you must sleep with me, as you did on our travels."

The next morning the old woman of the house brought up their breakfast. Spikeman lived in a very comfortable way, very different

to what he did as a travelling tinker; and he really appeared to Joey to be, with the exception of his conversation, which was always superior, a very different person from what he was when Joey first fell in with him. For many days they remained at Dudstone, visiting at different houses, and were always well received.

"You appear so well known, and so well liked in this town," observed Joey, "I wonder you do not set up a business, particularly as you say you have money in the bank."

"If I did, Joey, I should no longer be happy, no longer be my own master, and do as I please; in fact, I should no longer be the gentleman, that is, the gentleman by profession, as near as I can be one—the man who has his liberty, and enjoys it. No, no, boy; I have tried almost every thing, and have come to my own conclusions. Have you been reading the book I gave you?"

"Yes; I have nearly finished it."

"I am glad to see that you like reading. Nothing so much improves or enlarges the mind. You must never let a day pass without reading two or three hours, and when we travel again, and are alone by the way-side, we will read together; I will choose some books on purpose."

"I should like very much to write to my sister Mary," said Joey.

"Do so, and tell her that you have employment; but do not say exactly how. There is paper and pens in the drawer. Stop, I will find them for you." Spikeman went to the drawer, and when taking out the pens and paper, laid hold of some manuscript writing. "By-the-bye," said he, laughing, "I told you, Joey, that I had been a captain's clerk on board the Weasel, a fourteen-gun brig; I wrote the captain's despatches for him; and here are two of them of which I kept copies,

that I might laugh over them occasionally. I wrote all his letters; for he was no great penman in the first place, and had a very great confusion of ideas in the second. He certainly was indebted to me, as you will acknowledge, when you hear what I read and tell you. I served under him, cruising in the Channel; and I flatter myself that it was entirely through my writings that he got his promotion. He is now Captain Alcibiades Ajax Boggs, and all through me. We were cruising off the coast of France, close in to Ushant, where we perceived a fleet of small vessels, called chasse-marées (coasting luggers,) laden with wine, coming round; and, as we did not know of any batteries thereabouts, we ran in to attempt a capture. We cut off three of them; but just as we had compelled them, by firing broadsides into them, to lower their sails, a battery, which our commander did not know any thing of, opened

fire upon us, and before we could get out of range, which we did as soon as we could, one shot came in on deck, and cut the topsail halyard's fall, at the very time that the men were hoisting the sail (for we had been shaking another reef out), and the rope being divided, as the men were hauling upon it, of course they all tumbled on the deck, one over the other. The other shot struck our foremast, and chipped off a large slice, besides cutting away one of the shrouds, and the signal halyards. Now, you do not know enough about ships to understand that there was very little harm done, or that the coasting vessels were very small, with only three or four men on board of each of them; it therefore required some little management to make a flaming despatch. But I did it—only listen; now—I have begun in the true Nelson style.

" ' TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

" ' Sir,—It has pleased the Great Disposer

to grant a decided victory to his Majesty's arms, through the efforts of the vessel which I have the honour to command. On the 23rd day of August last, Ushant then bearing S.W. ¾ West, wind W., distant from three to four leagues, perceived an enemy's fleet, of three-masted vessels rounding the point, with the hopes, I presume, of gaining the port of Cherburg. Convinced that I should have every support from the gallant officers and true British tars under my command, I immediately bore down to the attack; the movements of the enemy fully proved that they were astounded at the boldness of the monœuvre, and instead of keeping their line, they soon separated, and sheer'd off in different directions, so as to receive the support of their batteries.'

"You see, Joey, I have said three-masted vessels, which implies ships, although, as in this case, they were only small coasting luggers.

"'In half an hour we were sufficiently close to the main body to open our fire, and broadside after broadside were poured in, answered by the batteries on the coast, with unerring aim. Notwithstanding the unequal contest, I have the pleasure of informing you, that in less than half an hour we succeeded in capturing three of the vessels (named as per margin), and finding nothing more could be done for the honour of his Majesty's arms, as soon as we could take possession, I considered it my duty to haul off from the incessant and galling fire of the batteries.

"'In this well-fought and successful contest, I trust that the British flag has not been tarnished. What the enemy's loss may have been it is impossible to say; they acknowledge themselves, however, that it has been severe.'"

"But, did the enemy lose any men?" demanded Joey.

"Not one; but you observe I do not say loss of life, although the Admiralty may think I refer to it—that's not my fault. But I was perfectly correct in saying the enemy's loss was great; for the poor devils who were in the chasse-marées, when they were brought on board, wrung their hands, and said, that they had *lost their all.* Now, what loss can be greater than *all?*

"'His Majesty's vessel is much injured in her spars and rigging from the precision of the enemy's fire; her lower rigging—running rigging being cut away, her foremast severely wounded, and, I regret to add, severely injured in the hull; but, such was the activity of the officers and men, that, with the exception of the foremast, which will require the services of the dock-yard, in twenty-four hours we were ready to resume the contest. I am happy to say, that, although we have many men hurt, we have none killed; and I

trust that, under the care of the surgeon, they will, most of them, be soon able to resume their duty.' "

" But you had no men wounded?" interrupted Joey.

" None wounded! I don't say wounded, I only say hurt. Didn't a dozen of the men, who were hoisting the main-topsail when the fall was cut away, all tumble backwards on deck? and do you think they were not hurt by the fall?—of course, they were; besides, one man nearly had his finger jammed off, and another burnt his hand by putting too much powder to the touch-hole of his carronade. So I continue:—

" ' It now becomes my duty to point out to their Lordships the very meritorious conduct of Mr. John Smith, an old and deserving officer, Mr. James Hammond, Mr. Cross, and Mr. Byfleet; indeed, I may say that all the officers under my command vied in

their exertions for the honour of the British flag.'

"You see the commander had quarrelled with some of his officers at that time, and would not mention them. I tried all I could to persuade him, but he was obstinate.

"'I have the honour to return a list of casualties and the names of the vessels taken, and have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"'ALCIBIADES AJAX BOGGS.

"'Report of killed and wounded on board of his Majesty's brig Weazel, in the action of the 23rd of August:—Killed, none; wounds and contusions, John Potts, William Smith, Thomas Snaggs, William Walker, and Peter Potter, able seamen; John Hobbs, Timothy Stout, and Walter Pye, marines.

"'Return of vessels captured in the action of the 23rd of August, by his Majesty's brig Weazel:—Notre Dame de Misericorde,

de Rochelle; La Vengeur, de Bordeux; L'Etoille du Matin, de Charente.

(Signed) "'ALCIBADES AJAX BOGGS,

"'Commander.'"

"Well, I'm sure, if you had not told me otherwise, I should have thought it had been a very hard fight."

"That's what they did at the Admiralty, and just what we wanted; but now I come to my other despatch, which obtained the rank for my captain; and upon which I plume myself not a little. You must know, that when cruising in the Channel, in a thick fog, and not keeping a very sharp look-out, we ran foul of a French privateer. It was about nine o'clock in the evening, and we had very few hands on deck, and those on deck were most of them, if not all, asleep. We came bang against one another, and carried away both spars and yards; and the privateer, who was by far the most alert after the acci-

dent happened, cut away a good deal of our rigging, and got clear of us before our men could be got up from below. Had they been on the look-out, they might have boarded us to a certainty, for all was confusion and amazement; but they cleared themselves and got off before our men could get up and run to their guns. She was out of sight immediately, from the thickness of the fog; however, we fired several broadsides in the direction we supposed she might be; and there was an end to the matter. Altogether, as you perceive, it was not a very creditable affair."

"Why, no," replied Joey; "I don't see how you could make much out of that."

"Well, if you can't see, now you shall hear:—

"'TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

"'Sir,—I have the honour to acquaint you that, on the night of the 10th November, cruising in the Channel, with the wind from

S. E., and foggy, a large vessel hove in sight on our weather bow.'

"You see, I didn't say we perceived a vessel, for that would not have been correct.

"'As she evidently did not perceive us, we continued our course towards her; the men were summoned to their quarters, and, in a very short time, were ready to uphold the honour of the English flag. The first collision between the two vessels was dreadful; but she contrived to disengage herself, and we were therefore prevented carrying her by boarding. After repeated broadsides, to which, in her disabled and confused state, she could make no return, she gradually increased her distance; still, she had remained in our hands, a proud trophy—I say, still she had been a proud trophy—had not the unequal collision' —[it was a very unequal collision, for she was a much smaller vessel than we were]—'car-

ried away our fore-yard, cat-head, fore-top-gallant mast, jibboom, and dolphin-striker, and rendered us, from the state of our rigging, a mere wreck. Favoured by the thick fog and darkness of the night, I regret that, after all our efforts, she contrived to escape, and the spoils of victory were wrested from us after all our strenuous exertions in our country's cause.

"'When all performed their duty in so exemplary a manner, it would be unfair, and, indeed, invidious, to particularize; still, I cannot refrain from mentioning the good conduct of Mr. Smith, my first lieutenant; Mr. Bowles, my second lieutenant; Mr. Chabb, my worthy master; Mr. Jones and Mr. James, master's mates; Messrs. Hall, Small, Ball, and Pall, midshipmen; and Messrs. Sweet and Sharp, volunteers. I also received every assistance from Mr. Grulf, the purser, who offered his services, and I

cannot omit the conduct of Mr. Spikeman, clerk. I am also highly indebted to the attention and care shown by Mr. Thorn, surgeon, who is so well supported in his duties by Mr. Green, assistant surgeon, of this ship. The activity of Mr. Bruce, the boatswain, was deserving of the highest encomiums; and it would be an act of injustice not to notice the zeal of Mr. Bile, the carpenter, and Mr. Sponge, gunner of the ship. James Anderson, quarter-master, received a severe contusion, but is now doing well; I trust I shall not be considered presumptuous in recommending him to a boatswain's warrant.

" ' I am happy to say that our casualties, owing to the extreme panic of the enemy, are very few. I have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient and humble servant,

" ' ALCIBIADES AJAX BOGGS.

" ' Wounded—Very severely, James An-

derson, quarter-master. Contusions—John Peters, able seaman; James Morrison, marine; Thomas Snowball, captain's cook.'

"There, now; that I consider a very capital letter; no Frenchman, not even an American, could have made out a better case. The Admiralty were satisfied that something very gallant had been done, although the fog made it appear not quite so clear as it might have been; and the consequence was, that my commander received his promotion. There, now write your letter, and tell your sister that she must answer it as soon as possible, as you are going out with me for orders in three or four days, and shall be absent for three months."

Joey wrote a long letter to Mary; he stated the adventure with the two scoundrels who would have robbed him, his afterwards falling in with a gentleman who dealt in cutlery, and his being taken into his service;

and, as Spikeman had told him, requested her to answer directly, as he was about to set off on a circuit with his master, which would occasion his absence for three months.

Mary's reply came before Joey's departure. She stated that she was comfortable and happy, that her mistress was very kind to her, but that she felt that the work was rather too much; however, she would do her duty to her employers. There was much good advice to Joey, much affectionate feeling, occasional recurrence to past scenes, and thankfulness that she was no longer a disgrace to her parents and her sex; it was an humble, grateful, contrite, and affectionate effusion, which did honour to poor Mary, and proved that she was sincere in her assertions of continuing in the right path, and dotingly attached to our hero. Joey read it over and over again, and shed tears of pleasure as he recalled the scenes which had passed. Poor Joey had lost

his father and mother, as he supposed, for ever; and it was soothing to the boy's feelings to know that there were some people in the world who loved him; and he remained for hours thinking of Mary, Mrs. Chopper, and his good and kind friends, the M'Shanes.

Two days after the receipt of Mary's letter, Spikeman and Joey went to the houses of their various acquaintances and bade them adieu, announcing their intention to set off on the circuit. Spikeman paid up every thing, and put away many articles in his room which had been taken out for use. Joey and he then put on their travelling garments, and, waiting till it was dusk, locked the chambers and set off to the little public-house, where the knife-grinder's wheel had been deposited. Spikeman had taken the precaution to smudge and dirty his face, and Joey, at his request, had done the same. When they entered the public-house, the landlord greeted Spikeman

warmly, and asked him what he had been about. Spikeman replied that, as usual, he had been to see his old mother, and now he must roll his grindstone a bit. After drinking a pot of beer at the kitchen-fire, they retired to bed; and the next morning, at daylight, they once more proceeded on their travels.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH THE TINKER FALLS IN LOVE WITH A LADY OF HIGH DEGREE.

For many months Spikeman and our hero travelled together, during which time Joey had learned to grind a knife or a pair of scissors as well as Spikeman himself, and took most of the work off his hands; they suited each other, and passed their time most pleasantly, indulging themselves every day with a few hours' repose and reading on the wayside.

One afternoon, when it was very sultry, they had stopped and ensconced themselves

in a shady copse by the side of the road, not far from an old mansion, which stood on an eminence, when Spikeman said, "Joey, I think we are intruding here; and, if so, may be forcibly expelled, which will not be pleasant; so roll the wheel in, out of sight, and then we may indulge in a siesta, which, during this heat, will be very agreeable."

"What's a siesta?" said Joey.

"A siesta is a nap in the middle of the day, universally resorted to by the Spaniards, Italians, and, indeed, by all the inhabitants of hot climates; with respectable people it is called a siesta, but with a travelling tinker it must be, I suppose, called a snooze."

"Well, then, a snooze let it be," said Joey, taking his seat on the turf by Spikeman, in a reclining position.

They had not yet composed themselves to sleep, when they heard a female voice singing at a little distance. The voice evidently pro-

ceeded from the pleasure-grounds which were between them and the mansion.

"Hush!" said Spikeman, putting up his finger, as he raised himself on his elbow.

The party evidently advanced nearer to them, and carolled, in very beautiful tones, the song of Ariel—

> "Where the bee sucks, there lurk I,
> In the cowslip's bell I lie," &c.

"Heigho!" exclaimed a soft voice, after the song had been finished; "I wish I could creep into a cowslip bell. Miss Araminta, you are not coming down the walk yet; it appears you are in no hurry, so I'll begin my new book."

After this soliloquy there was silence. Spikeman made a sign to Joey to remain still, and then, creeping on his hands and knees, by degrees arrived as far as he could venture to the other side of the copse.

In a minute or two another footstep was

heard coming down the gravel walk, and soon afterwards another voice.

"Well, Melissa, did you think I never would come? I could not help it. Uncle would have me rub his foot a little."

"Ay, there's the rub," replied the first young lady. "Well, it was a sacrifice of friendship at the altar of humanity. Poor papa! I wish I could rub his foot for him; but I always do it to a quadrille tune, and he always says I rub it too hard; I only follow the music."

"Yes, and so does he; for you sometimes set him a-dancing, you giddy girl."

"I am not fit for a nurse, and that's the fact, Araminta. I can feel for him, but I cannot sit still a minute; that you know. Poor mamma was a great loss; and, when she died, I don't know what I should have done if it hadn't been for my dear cousin Araminta.

"Nay, you are very useful in your way; for you play and sing to him, and that soothes him."

"Yes, I do it with pleasure, for I can do but little else; but, Araminta, my singing is that of a caged bird; I must sing where they hang my cage. O, how I wish I had been a man!"

"I believe that there never was a woman yet, who has not, at one time in her life, said the same thing, however mild and quiet she may have been in disposition. But, as we cannot, why——"

"Why, the next thing is to wish to be a man's wife, Araminta; is it not?"

"It is natural, I suppose, to wish so," replied Araminta; "but I seldom think about it. I must first see the man I can love before I think about marrying."

"And now, tell me, Araminta, what kind of man do you think you could fancy?"

"I should like him to be steady, generous, brave, and handsome; of unexceptionable family, with plenty of money; that's all."

"O, that's all! I admire your 'that's all.' You are not very likely to meet with your match, I'm afraid. If he's steady, he is not very likely to be very generous; and if to those two qualifications you tack on birth, wealth, beauty, and bravery, I think your 'that's all' is very misplaced. Now I have other ideas."

"Pray let me have them, Melissa."

"I do not want my husband to be very handsome, but I wish him to be full of fire and energy; a man that—in fact, a man that could keep me in tolerable order. I do not care about his having money, as I have plenty in my own possession to bestow on any man I love; but he must be of good education—very fond of reading—romantic not a little—and his extraction must be,

however poor, respectable—that is, his parents must not have been tradespeople. You know I prefer riding a spirited horse to a quiet one; and, if I were to marry, I should like a husband who would give me some trouble to manage; I think I would master him."

"So have many thought before you, Melissa, but they have been mistaken."

"Yes, because they have attempted it by meekness and submission, thinking to disarm by that method. It never will do, any more than getting into a passion. When a man gives up his liberty, he does make a great sacrifice—that I'm sure of—and a woman should prevent him feeling that he is chained to her."

"And how would you manage that?" said Araminta.

"By being infinite in my variety, always cheerful, and, instead of permitting him to

stay at home, pinned to my apron-string, order him out away from me, join his amusements, and always have people in the house that he liked, so as to avoid being too much tête-a-tête. The caged bird ever wants to escape; open the doors and let him take a flight, and he will come back of his own accord. Of course, I am supposing my gentleman to be naturally good-hearted and good-tempered. Sooner than marry what you call a steady, sober man, I'd run away with a captain of a privateer. And, one thing more, Araminta, I never would, passionately, distractedly fond as I might be, acknowledge to my husband the extent of my devotion and affection for him. I would always have him to suppose that I could still love him better than what I yet did—in short, that there was more to be gained; for, depend upon it, when a man is assured that he has nothing more to gain, his attentions are over.

You can't expect a man to chace nothing, you know."

"You are a wild girl, Melissa; I only hope you will marry well."

"I hope I shall; but I can tell you this, that, if I do make a mistake, at all events, my husband will find that he has made a mistake also. There's a little lurking devil in me, which, if roused up by bad treatment, would, I expect, make me more than a match for him. I'm almost sorry that I've so much money of my own, for I suspect every man who says any thing pretty to me; and there are but few in this world who would scorn to marry for money."

"I believe so, Melissa; but your person would be quite sufficient without fortune."

"Thanks, coz.; for a woman, that's very handsome of you. And so now we will begin our new book."

Miss Melissa now commenced reading;

and Spikeman, who had not yet seen the faces of the two young ladies, crept softly nearer to the side of the copse, so as to enable him to satisfy his curiosity. In this position he remained nearly an hour, when the book was closed, and the young ladies returned to the house, Melissa again singing as she went.

"Joey," said Spikeman, "I did not think that there was such a woman in existence as that girl; she is just the idea that I have formed of what a woman ought to be; I must find out who she is; I am in love with her, and——"

"—Mean to make her a tinker's bride," replied Joey, laughing.

"Joey, I shall certainly knock you down, if you apply that term to her. Come let us go to the village, it is close at hand."

As soon as they arrived at the village, Spikeman went into the ale-house. During the remainder of the day, he was in a brown

study, and Joey amused himself with a book. At nine o'clock the company had all quitted the tap-room, and then Spikeman entered into conversation with the hostess. In the course of conversation, she informed him that the mansion belonged to Squire Mathews, who had formerly been a great manufacturer, and who had purchased the place; that the old gentleman had long suffered from the gout, and saw no company, which was very bad for the village; that Miss Melissa was his daughter, and he had a son, who was with his regiment in India, and, it was said, not on very good terms with his father; that the old gentleman was violent and choleric because he was always in pain; but that every one spoke well of Miss Melissa and Miss Araminta, her cousin, who were both very kind to the poor people. Having obtained these particulars, Spikeman went to bed; he slept little that night, as Joey, who was his bed-

fellow, could vouch for: for he allowed Joey no sleep either, turning and twisting round in the bed every two minutes. The next morning they arose early and proceeded on their way.

"Joey," said Spikeman, after an hour's silence, "I have been thinking a great deal last night."

"So I suppose, for you certainly were not sleeping."

"No, I could not sleep; the fact is, Joey, I am determined to have that girl, Miss Mathews, if I can; a bold attempt for a tinker, you will say, but not for a gentleman born as I was. I thought I never should care for a woman; but there is a current in the affairs of men. I shall now drift with the current, and if it leads to fortune, so much the better; if not, he who dares greatly, does greatly. I feel convinced that I should make her a good husband, and it shall not be my fault if I do not gain her."

"Do you mean to propose in form with your foot on your wheel?"

"No, saucebox, I don't; but I mean to turn my knife-grinder's wheel into a wheel of fortune; and, with your help, I will do so."

"You are sure of my help, if you are serious," replied Joey; "but how you are to manage I cannot comprehend."

"I have already made out a programme, although the interweaving of the plot is not yet decided upon; but I must get to the next town as fast as I can, as I must make preparations."

On arrival, they took up humble quarters as usual; and then Spikeman went to a stationer's, and told them that he had got a commission to execute for a lady. He bought sealing-wax, a glass seal, with "Esperance" as a motto, gilt-edged note-paper, and several other requisites in the stationery line, and ordered them to be packed up carefully, that he might

not soil them; he then purchased scented soap, a hair-brush, and other articles for the toilet; and having obtained all these requisites, he added to them one or two pair of common beaver gloves, and then went to the barber's to get his hair cut.

"I am all ready now, Joey," said he, when he returned to the ale-house; "and to-morrow we retrace our steps."

"What! back to the village?"

"Yes; and where we shall remain some time perhaps."

On reaching the village next morning, Spikeman hired a bed-room, and, leaving Joey to work the grindstone, remained in his apartments. When Joey returned in the evening, he found Spikeman had been very busy with the soap, and had restored his hands to something like their proper colour; he had also shaved himself, and washed his hair clean and brushed it well.

"You see, Joey, I have commenced operations already: I shall soon be prepared to act the part of the gentleman who has turned tinker to gain the love of a fair lady of high degree."

"I wish you success; but what are your plans?"

"That you will find out to-morrow morning; now we must go to bed."

CHAPTER IX.

PLOTTING, READING, AND WRITING.

SPIKEMAN was up early the next morning. When they had breakfasted, he desired Joey to go for the knife-grinder's wheel, and follow him. As soon as they were clear of the village, Spikeman said, "It will not do to remain at the village; there's a cottage half a mile down the road, where they once gave me a lodging; we must try if we can get it now."

When they arrived at the cottage, Spikeman made a very satisfactory bargain for board and lodging for a few days, stating that they charged so much at the village alehouse, that he could not afford to stay there,

and that he expected to have a good job at Squire Mathews's, up at the mansion-house. As soon as this arrangement was completed, they returned back to the copse near to the mansion-house, Joey rolling the knife-grinder's wheel.

"You see, Joey," said Spikeman, "the first thing necessary will be to stimulate curiosity; we may have to wait a day or two before the opportunity may occur, but, if necessary, I will wait a month. That Miss Mathews will very often be found on the seat by the copse, either alone or with her cousin, I take to be certain, as all ladies have their favourite retreats. I do not intend that they should see me yet; I must make an impression first. Now, leave the wheel on the outside, and come with me; do not speak."

As soon as they were in the copse, Spikeman reconnoitred very carefully, to ascertain if either of the young ladies were on the bench,

and finding no one there, he returned to Joey.

"They cannot come without our hearing their footsteps," said Spikeman; "so now we must wait here patiently."

Spikeman threw himself down on the turf in front of the copse, and Joey followed his example.

"Come, Joey, we may as well read a little to pass away the time; I have brought two volumes of Byron with me"

For half an hour they were thus occupied, when they heard the voice of Miss Mathews singing as before as she came down the walk. Spikeman rose and peeped through the foliage. "She is alone," said he, "which is just what I wished. Now, Joey, I am going to read to you aloud." Spikeman then began to read in the masterly style which we have before referred to:—

"'I loved, and was beloved again;
They tell me, Sir, you never knew
Those gentle frailties: if 'tis true
I shorten all my joys and pain,
To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;
But all now are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you
There, o'er themselves and nations too.
I am, or rather was, a Prince,
A chief of thousands, and could lead
Them on when each would foremost bleed,
But would not o'er myself
The like control. But to resume:
I loved, and was beloved again;
In sooth it is a happy doom—
But yet where happiness ends in pain.'

"I am afraid that is but too true, my dear boy," said Spikeman, laying down the book; "Shakspere has most truly said, 'The course of true love never did run smooth.' Nay, he cannot be said to be original in that idea, for Horace and most of the Greek and Latin poets have said much the same thing before him; however, let us go on again—

" ' We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to my lady's bower
Was fiery expectation's dower ;
The days and nights were nothing—all
Except the hour which doth recall
In the long lapse from youth to age,
No other like itself.'

"Do you observe the extreme beauty of that passage ?" said Spikeman.

" Yes," said Joey, " it is very beautiful."

" You would more feel the power of it, my dear boy, if you were in love, but your time is not yet come ; but I am afraid we must leave off now, for I expect letters of consequence by the post, and it is useless, I fear, waiting here. Come, put the book by, and let us take up the wheel of my sad fortunes."

Spikeman and Joey rose on their feet. Joey went to the knife-grinder's wheel, and Spikeman followed him without looking back ; he heard a rustling, nevertheless, among the bushes, which announced to him

that his manœuvre had succeeded; and, as soon as he was about fifty yards from the road, he took the wheel from Joey, desiring him to look back, as if accidentally. Joey did so, and saw Miss Mathews following them with her eyes.

"That will do," observed Spikeman; "her curiosity is excited, and that is all I wish."

What Spikeman said was correct. Araminta joined Miss Mathews shortly after Spikeman and Joey had gone away.

"My dear Araminta," said Melissa, "such an adventure! I can hardly credit my senses."

"Why, what is the matter, dear cousin?"

"Do you see that man and boy, with a knife-grinder's wheel, just in sight now?"

"Yes, to be sure I do; but what of them? Have they been insolent?"

"Insolent! they never saw me; they had

no idea that I was here. I heard voices as I came down the walk, so I moved softly, and when I gained the seat, there was somebody reading poetry so beautifully; I never heard any one read with such correct emphasis and clear pronunciation. And then he stopped, and talked to the boy about the Greek and Latin poets, and quoted Shakspere. There must be some mystery."

"Well, but if there is, what has that to do with the travelling tinkers?"

"What! why it was the travelling tinker himself, dearest; but he cannot be a tinker; for I heard him say that he expected letters of consequence, and no travelling tinker could do that."

"Why, no; I doubt if most of them can read at all."

"Now, I would give my little finger to know who that person is."

"Did you see his face?"

"No; he never turned this way; the boy did when they were some distance off. It's very strange. What was he reading?"

"I don't know; it was very beautiful. I wonder if he will ever come this way again! if he does——"

"Well, Melissa, and if he does?"

"My scissors want grinding very badly; they won't cut a bit."

"Why, Melissa, you don't mean to fall in love with a tinker?" said Araminta, laughing.

"He is no tinker, I'm sure; but why is he disguised? I should like to know."

"Well, but I came out to tell you that your father wants you. Come along."

The two young ladies then returned to the house, but the mystery of the morning was broached more than once, and canvassed in every possible way."

Spikeman, as soon as he had returned to

the cottage, took out his writing materials to concoct an epistle. After some time in correcting, he made out a fair copy, which he read to Joey.

"'I tremble lest at the first moment you cast your eyes over the page, you throw it away without deigning to peruse it; and yet there is nothing in it which could raise a blush on the cheek of a modest maiden. If it be a crime to have seen you by chance, to have watched you by stealth, to consider hallowed every spot you visit—nay, more, if it be a crime to worship at the shrine of beauty and of innocence, or, to speak more boldly, to adore you—then am I guilty. You will ask, why I resort to a clandestine step. Simply, because, when I discovered your name and birth, I felt assured that an ancient feud between the two families, to which nor you nor I were parties, would bar an introduction to your father's house. You would ask me who

I am. A gentleman, I trust, by birth and education; a poor one, I grant; and you have made me poorer, for you have robbed me of more than wealth—my peace of mind and my happiness. I feel that I am presumptuous and bold; but forgive me. Your eyes tell me you are too kind, too good, to give unnecessary pain; and if you knew how much I have already suffered, you would not oppress further a man who was happy until he saw you. Pardon me, therefore, my boldness, and excuse the means I have taken of placing this communication before you.'

"That will do, I think," said Spikeman; "and now, Joey, we will go out and take a walk, and I will give you your directions."

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE PLOT THICKENS.

THE next day our hero, having received the letter with his instructions, went with the wheel down to the copse near to the mansion-house. Here he remained quietly until he heard Miss Melissa coming down the gravel-walk; he waited till she had time to gain her seat, and then, leaving his wheel outside, he walked round the copse until he came to her. She raised her eyes from her book when she saw him.

"If you please, Miss, have you any scissors or knives for me to grind?" said Joey, bowing with his hat in his hand.

Miss Mathews looked earnestly at Joey.

"Who are you?" said she at last; "are you the boy who was on this road with a knife-grinder and his wheel yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes, Madam, we came this way," replied Joey, bowing again very politely.

"Is he your father?"

"No, Madam, he is my uncle; he is not married."

"Your uncle. Well, I have a pair of scissors to grind, and I will go for them; you may bring your wheel in here, as I wish to see how you grind."

"Certainly, Miss, with the greatest pleasure."

Joey brought in his wheel, and observing that Miss Mathews had left her book on the seat, he opened it at the marked page and slipped the letter in; and scarcely had done so, when he perceived Miss Mathews and her cousin coming towards him.

"Here are the scissors; mind you make them cut well."

"I will do my best, Miss," replied Joey, who immediately set to work.

"Have you been long at this trade?" said Miss Mathews.

"No, Miss, not very long."

"And your uncle, has he been long at it?"

Joey hesitated on purpose. "Why, I really don't know exactly how long."

"Why is your uncle not with you?"

"He was obliged to go to town, Miss—that is, to a town at some distance from here—on business."

"Why, what business can a tinker have?" inquired Araminta.

"I suppose he wanted some soft solder, Miss; he requires a great deal."

"Can you write and read, boy?" inquired Melissa.

"Me, Miss! how should I know how to

write and read?" replied Joey, looking up.

"Have you been much about here?"

"Yes, Miss, a good deal; uncle seems to like this part; we never were so long before. The scissors are done now, Miss, and they will cut very well. Uncle was in hopes of getting some work at the mansion-house when he came back."

"Can your uncle write and read?"

"I believe he can a little, Miss."

"What do I owe you for the scissors?"

"Nothing, Miss, if you please; I had rather not take any thing from you."

"And why not from me?"

"Because I never worked for so pretty a lady before. Wish you good morning, ladies," said Joey, taking up his wheel and rolling it away.

"Well, Araminta, what do you think now? That's no knife-grinder's boy; he

is as well-bred and polite as any lad I ever saw."

"I suspect that he is a little story-teller, saying that he could not write and read," Araminta replied.

"And so do I; what made him in such a hurry to go away?"

"I suppose he did not like our questions. I wonder whether the uncle will come. Well, Melissa, I must not quit your father just now, so I must leave you with your book;" and, so saying, Araminta took her way to the house.

Miss Mathews was in a reverie for some minutes; Joey's behaviour had puzzled her almost as much as what she had overheard the day before. At last she opened the book, and, to her great astonishment, beheld the letter. She started—looked at it—it was addressed to her. She demurred at first whether she should open it. It must have been put

there by the tinker's boy—it was evidently no tinker's letter; it must be a love-letter, and she ought not to read it. There was something, however, so very charming in the whole romance of the affair, if it should turn out, as she suspected, that the tinker should prove a gentleman who had fallen in love with her, and had assumed the disguise. Melissa wanted an excuse to herself for opening the letter. At last she said to herself, "Who knows but what it may be a petition from some poor person or another who is in distress? I ought to read it at all events."

Had it proved to be a petition, Miss Melissa would have been terribly disappointed. "It certainly is very respectful," thought Melissa, after she had read it, "but I cannot reply to it; that would never do. There certainly is nothing I can take offence at. It must be the tinker himself, I am sure of that; but still he does not say so. Well, I don't

know, but I feel very anxious as to what this will come to. O, it can come to nothing, for I cannot love a man I have never seen, and I would not admit a stranger to an interview; that's quite decided. I must show the letter to Araminta. Shall I? I don't know, she is so particular, so steady, and would be talking of propriety, and prudence; it would vex her so, and put her quite in a fever, she would be so unhappy; no, it would be cruel to say any thing to her, she would fret so about it; I won't tell her until I think it absolutely necessary. It is a very gentleman-like hand, and elegant language too; but still I'm not going to carry on a secret correspondence with a tinker. It must be the tinker. What an odd thing altogether! What can his name be? An old family quarrel, too. Why it's a Romeo and Juliet affair, only Romeo's a tinker. Well, one mask is as good as another. He acknowledges himself

poor, I like that of him, there's something so honest in it. Well, after all, it will be a little amusement to a poor girl like me, shut up from year's end to year's end, with opodeldocs always in my nose; so I will see what the end of it may be," thought Melissa, rising from her seat to go into the house, and putting the letter into her pocket.

Joey went back to Spikeman and reported progress.

"That's all I wish, Joey," said Spikeman; "now you must not go there to-morrow; we must let it work a little; if she is at all interested in the letter, she will be impatient to know more."

Spikeman was right. Melissa looked up and down the road very often during the next day, and was rather silent during the evening. The second day after, Joey, having received his instructions, set off, with his knife-grinder's wheel, for the mansion-house.

When he went round the copse where the bench was, he found Miss Mathews there.

"I beg your pardon, Miss, but do you think there is any work at the house?"

"Come here, Sir," said Melissa, assuming a very dignified air.

"Yes, Miss," said Joey, walking slowly to her.

"Now, tell me the truth, and I will reward you with half-a-crown."

"Yes, Miss."

"Did you not put this letter in my book the day before yesterday?"

"Letter, Miss! what letter?"

"Don't you deny it, for you know you did; and if you don't tell me the truth, my father is a magistrate, and I'll have you punished."

"I was told not to tell," replied Joey, pretending to be frightened.

"But you must tell; yes, and tell me immediately."

"I hope you are not angry, Miss."

"No; not if you tell the truth."

"I don't exactly know, Miss, but a gentleman ——"

"What gentleman?"

"A gentleman that came to uncle, Miss."

"A gentleman that came to your uncle; well, go on."

"I suppose he wrote the letter, but I'm not sure; and uncle gave me the letter to put it where you might see it."

"O, then, a gentleman you say gave your uncle this letter, and your uncle gave it to you to bring to me. Is that it?"

"Uncle gave me the letter, but I dare say uncle will tell you all about it, and who the gentleman was."

"Is your uncle come back?"

"He comes back to-night, Madam."

"You're sure your uncle did not write the letter?"

"La, Miss! uncle write such a letter as that—and to a lady like you—that would be odd!"

"Very odd, indeed!" replied Miss Melissa, who remained a minute or two in thought. "Well, my lad," said she at last, "I must and will know who has had the boldness to write this letter to me; and as your uncle knows, you will bring him here to-morrow, that I may inquire about it; and let him take care that he tells the truth."

"Yes, Miss; I will tell him as soon as he comes home. I hope you are not angry with me, Miss; I did not think there was any harm in putting into the book such a nice clean letter as that."

"No, I am not angry with you; your uncle is more to blame; I shall expect him to-morrow about this time. You may go now."

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH THE TINKER MAKES LOVE.

Joey made his obeisance, and departed as if he was frightened. Miss Melissa watched him: at last she thought, "Tinker or no tinker? that is the question. No tinker, for a cool hundred, as my father would say; for, no tinker's boy, no tinker; and that is no tinker's boy. How clever of him to say that the letter was given him by a gentleman! Now I can send to him to interrogate him, and have an interview without any offence to my feelings; and if he is disguised, as I feel confident that he is, I shall soon discover it."

Miss Melissa Mathews did not sleep that

night; and at the time appointed she was sitting on the bench with all the assumed dignity of a newly-made magistrate. Spikeman and Joey were not long before they made their appearance. Spikeman was particularly clean and neat, although he took care to wear the outward appearance of a tinker; his hands were, by continual washing in hot water, very white, and he had paid every attention to his person, except in wearing his rough and sullied clothes.

"My boy tells me, Miss, that you wish to speak to me," said Spikeman, assuming the air of a vulgar man.

"I did, friend," said Melissa, after looking at Spikeman for a few minutes; "a letter has been brought here clandestinely, and your boy confesses that he received it from you; now, I wish to know how you came by it."

"Boy, go away to a distance," said Spikeman, very angrily; "if you can't keep one

secret, at all events you shall not hear any more."

Joey retreated, as had been arranged between them.

"Well, Madam, or Miss (I suppose Miss)," said Spikeman, "that letter was written by a gentleman that loves the very ground you tread upon."

"And he requested it to be delivered to me?"

"He did, Miss; and if you knew, as I do, how he loves you, you would not be surprised at his taking so bold a step."

"I am surprised at your taking so bold a step, Tinker, as to send it by your boy."

"It was a long while before I would venture, Miss; but when he had told me what he did, I really could not help doing so; for I pitied him, and so would you, if you knew all."

"And, pray, what did he tell you?"

"He told me, Miss," said Spikeman, who had gradually assumed his own manner of speaking, "that he had ever rejected the thoughts of matrimony—that he rose up every morning thanking Heaven that he was free and independent—that he had scorned the idea of ever being captivated with the charms of a woman; but that one day he had by chance passed down this road, and had heard you singing as you were coming down to repose on this bench. Captivated by your voice, curiosity induced him to conceal himself in the copse behind us, and from thence he had a view of your person; nay, Miss, he told me more, that he had played the eavesdropper, and heard all your conversation, free and unconstrained as it was from the supposition that you were alone; he heard you express your sentiments and opinions, and finding that there was on this earth what, in his scepticism, he thought never to exist—

youth, beauty, talent, principle, and family, all united in one person—he had bowed at the shrine, and had become a silent and unseen worshipper."

Spikeman stopped speaking.

"Then, it appears that this gentleman, as you style him, has been guilty of the ungentlemanly practice of listening to private conversation—no very great recommendation."

"Such was not his intention at first; he was seduced to it by you. Do not blame him for that—now that I have seen you, I cannot; but, Miss, he told me more. He said that he felt that he was unworthy of you, and had not a competence to offer you, even if he could obtain your favour; that he discovered that there was a cause which prevented his gaining an introduction to your family; in fact, that he was hopeless and despairing. He had hovered near you for a long time, for he could not leave the air you breathed; and, at last, that

he had resolved to set his life upon the die and stake the hazard. Could I refuse him, Miss? He is of an old family, but not wealthy; he is a gentleman by birth and education, and therefore I did not think I was doing so very wrong in giving him the chance, trifling as it might be. I beg your pardon, Madam, if I have offended; and any message you may have to deliver to him, harsh as it may be—nay, even if it should be his death—it shall be faithfully and truly delivered."

"When shall you see him, Master Tinker?" said Melissa, very gravely.

"In a week he will be here, he said, not before."

"Considering he is so much in love, he takes his time," replied Melissa. "Well, Master Tinker, you may tell him from me that I've no answer to give him. It is quite ridiculous, as well as highly improper, that I

should receive a letter or answer one from a person whom I never saw. I admit his letter to be respectful, or I should have sent a much harsher message."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, Miss; that is, if you cannot be persuaded to see him for one minute."

"Most certainly not; I see no gentleman who is not received at my father's house, and properly presented to me. It may be the custom among people in your station of life, Master Tinker, but not in mine; and, as for yourself, I recommend you not to attempt to bring another letter."

"I must request your pardon for my fault, Miss; may I ask, after I have seen the poor young gentleman, am I to report to you what takes place?"

"Yes, if it is to assure me that I shall be no more troubled with his addresses."

"You shall be obeyed, Miss," continued

Spikeman; then, changing his tone and air, he said, "I beg your pardon, have you any knives or scissors to grind?"

"No," replied Melissa, jumping up from her seat, and walking towards the house to conceal her mirth. Shortly afterwards she turned round to look if Spikeman was gone; he had remained near the seat with his eyes following her footsteps. "I could love that man," thought Melissa, as she walked on. "What an eye he has, and what eloquence! I shall run away with a tinker, I do believe; but it is my destiny. Why does he say a week, a whole week? But how easy to see through his disguise! He had the stamp of a gentleman upon him. Dear me, I wonder how this is to end! I must not tell Araminta yet; she would be fidgetted out of her wits. How foolish of me! I quite forgot to ask the name of this *gentleman*. I'll not forget it next time."

CHAPTER XII.

WELL DONE, TINKER.

"It is beyond my hopes, Joey," said Spikeman, as they went back to the cottage; "she knows well enough that I was pleading for myself and not for another, and she has said quite as much as my most sanguine wishes could desire; in fact, she has given me permission to come again, and report the result of her message to the non-existent gentleman, which is equal to an assignation. I have no doubt now I shall ultimately succeed, and I must make my preparations; I told her that I should not be able to deliver her message

for a week, and she did not like the delay, that was clear; it will all work in my favour; a week's expectation will ripen the fruit more than daily meetings. I must leave this to-night; but you may as well stay here, for you can be of no use to me."

"Where are you going then?"

"First to Dudstone, to take my money out of the bank; I have a good sum, sufficient to carry me on for many months after our marriage, if I do marry her. I shall change my dress at Dudstone, of course, and then start for London by mail, and fit myself out with a most fashionable wardrobe, and et-ceteras, come down again to Cobhurst, the town we were in the other day, with my portmanteau, and from thence return here in my tinker's clothes to resume operations. You must not go near her during my absence."

"Certainly not; shall I go out at all?"

"No, not with the wheel; you might meet her on the road, and she would be putting questions to you."

That evening Spikeman set off, and was absent for five days, when he again made his appearance early in the morning. Joey had remained almost altogether in-doors, and had taken that opportunity of writing to Mary. He wrote on the day after Spikeman's departure, as it would give ample time for an answer before his return; but Joey received no reply to his letter.

"I am all prepared now, my boy," said Spikeman, whose appearance was considerably improved by the various little personal arrangements which he had gone through during the time he was in London. "I have my money in my pockets, my portmanteau at Cobhurst, and now it depends upon the rapidity of my success when the day is to come that I make the knife-grinder's wheel over to

you. I will go down now, but without you this time."

Spikeman set off with his wheel, and soon arrived at the usual place of meeting; Miss Mathews from the window, had perceived him coming down the road; she waited a quarter of an hour before she made her appearance; had not she had her eyes on the hands of the time-piece, and knew that it was only a quarter of an hour, she could have sworn that it had been two hours at least. Poor girl! she had during this week run over every circumstance connected with the meeting at least a thousand times; every word that had been exchanged had been engraven on her memory, and, without her knowledge almost, her heart had imperceptibly received the impression. She walked down reading her book very attentively until she arrived at the bench.

"Any knives or scissors to grind, Ma'am?" asked Spikeman, respectfully coming forward.

"You here again, Master Tinker! Why, I had quite forgot all about you."

(Heaven preserve us! how innocent girls will sometimes tell fibs out of modesty.)

"It were well for others, Miss Mathews, if their memory were equally treacherous," rejoined Spikeman.

"And why so, pray?"

"I speak of the gentleman to whom you sent the message."

"And what was his reply to you?"

"He acknowledged, Miss Mathews, the madness of his communication to you, of the impossibility of your giving him an answer, and of your admitting him to your presence. He admired the prudence of your conduct, but, unfortunately, his admiration only increased his love. He requested me to say that he will write no more."

"He has done wisely, and I am satisfied."

"I would I could say as much for him, Miss Mathews; for it is my opinion that his

very existence is now so bound up with the possession of you, that if he does not succeed he cannot exist."

"That is not my fault," replied Melissa, with her eyes cast down.

"No, it is not. Still, Miss Mathews, when it is considered that this man had abjured, I may say had almost despised women, it is no small triumph to you, or homage from him, that you have made him feel the power of your sex."

"It is his just punishment for having despised us."

"Perhaps so; yet if we were all punished for our misdeeds, as Shakspere says, who should escape whipping?"

"Pray, Master Tinker, where did you learn to quote Shakspere?"

"Where I learnt much more. I was not always a travelling tinker."

"So I presumed before this. And pray how came you to be one?"

"Miss Mathews, if the truth must be told, it arose from an unfortunate attachment."

"I have read in the olden poets that love would turn a god into a man; but I never heard of its making him a tinker," replied Melissa, smiling.

"The immortal Jove did not hesitate to conceal his thunderbolts when he deigned to love; and Cupid but too often has recourse to the aid of Proteus to secure success. We have, therefore, no mean warrantry."

"And who was the lady of thy love, good Master Tinker?"

"She was, Miss Mathews, like you in every thing. She was as beautiful, as intelligent, as honest, as proud, and, unfortunately, she was, like you, as obdurate, which reminds me of the unfortunate gentleman whose emissary I now am. In his madness he requested me—yes, Miss Mathews, me—a poor tinker—to woo you for him; to say to you all that he

would have said had he been admitted to your presence; to plead for him; to kneel for him at your feet, and entreat you to have some compassion for one whose only misfortune was to love—whose only fault was to be poor. What could I say, Miss Mathews—what could I reply to a person in his state of desperation? To reason with him, to argue with him, had been useless; I could only soothe him by making such a promise, provided that I was permitted to do it. Tell me, Miss Mathews, have I your permission to make the attempt?"

"First, Mr. Tinker, I should wish to know the name of this gentleman."

"I promised not to mention it, Miss Mathews, but I can evade the promise. I have a book which belongs to him in my pocket, on the inside of which are the arms of his family, with his father's name underneath them."

Spikeman presented the book. Melissa read the name, and then laid it on the bench, without saying a word.

"And now, Miss Mathews, as I have shown you that the gentleman has no wish to conceal who he is, may I venture to hope that you will permit me to plead occasionally, when I may see you, in his behalf?"

"I know not what to say, Master Tinker; I consider it a measure fraught with some danger both to the gentleman and to myself. You have quoted Shakspere, allow me now to do the same—

> 'Friendship is constant in all other things
> Save in the affairs and offices of love,
> Therefore all hearts use your own tongues.'

You observe, Master Tinker, that there is the danger of your pleading for yourself, and not for your client; and there is also the danger of my being insensibly moved to listen to the addresses of a tinker. Now,

only reflect upon the awful consequences," continued Melissa, smiling.

"I pledge you my honour, Miss Mathews, that I will only plead for the person whose name you have read in the book, and that you shall never be humiliated by the importunities of a mender of pots and pans."

"You pledge the honour of a tinker; what may that be worth?"

"A tinker that has the honour of conversing with Miss Mathews has an honour that cannot be too highly appreciated."

"Well, that is very polite for a mender of old kettles, but the schoolmaster is abroad, which, I presume, accounts for such strange anomalies as our present conversation. I must now wish you good morning."

"When may I have the honour of again presenting myself in behalf of the poor gentleman?"

"I can really make no appointments with

tinkers," replied Melissa; "if you personate that young man, you must be content to wait for days or months to catch a glimpse of the hem of my garment; to bay the moon and bless the stars, and I do not know what else. It is, in short, catch me when you can; and now, farewell, good Master Tinker," replied Melissa, leaving her own book, and taking the one Spikeman had put into her hand, which she carried with her to the house. It was all up with Miss Melissa Mathews, that was clear.

We shall pass over a fortnight, during which Spikeman, at first every other day, and subsequently every day or evening, had a meeting with Melissa, in every one of which he pleaded his cause in the third person. Joey began to be very tired of this affair, as he remained idle during the whole time, when one morning Spikeman told him that he must go down to the meeting place without the

wheel, and tell Miss Mathews his uncle, the tinker, was ill, and not able to come that evening.

Joey received his instructions, and went down immediately. Miss Mathews was not to be seen, and Joey, to avoid observation, hid himself in the copse, awaiting her arrival. At last she came, accompanied by Araminta, her cousin. As soon as they had taken their seats on the bench, Araminta commenced: "My dear Melissa, I could not speak to you in the house on account of your father, but Simpson has told me this morning that she thought it her duty to state to me, that you have been seen, not only in the day-time, but late in the evening, walking and talking with a strange-looking man. I have thought it very odd that you should not have mentioned this mysterious person to me lately, but I do think it most strange that you should have been so imprudent. Now, tell me every thing that

has happened, or I must really make it known to your father."

"And have me locked up for months; that's very kind of you, Araminta," replied Melissa.

"But consider what you have been doing, Melissa. Who is this man?"

"A travelling tinker, who brought me a letter from a gentleman who has been so silly as to fall in love with me."

"And what steps have you taken, cousin?"

"Positively refused to receive a letter, or to see the gentleman."

"Then why does the man come again?"

"To know if we have any knives or scissors to grind."

"Come, come, Melissa, this is ridiculous. All the servants are talking about it; and you know how servants talk. Why do you continue to see this fellow?"

"Because he amuses me, and it is so stupid of him."

"If that is your only reason, you can have no objection to see him no more, now that scandal is abroad. Will you promise me that you will not? Recollect, dear Melissa, how imprudent and how unmaidenly it is."

"Why, you don't think that I am going to elope with a tinker, do you, cousin?"

"I should think not; nevertheless, a tinker is no companion for Miss Mathews, dear cousin. Melissa, you have been most imprudent. How far you have told me the truth I know not; but this I must tell you, if you do not promise me to give up this disgraceful acquaintance, I will immediately acquaint my uncle."

"I will not be forced into any promise, Araminta," replied Melissa, indignantly.

"Well, then, I will not hurry you into it. I will give you forty-eight hours to reply, and if by that time your own good sense does not point out your indiscretion, I certainly

will make it known to your father; that is decided." So saying, Araminta rose from the bench and walked towards the house.

"Eight-and-forty hours," said Melissa, thoughtfully; "it must be decided by that time."

Joey, who had wit enough to perceive how matters stood, made up his mind not to deliver his message. He knew that Spikeman was well, and presumed that his staying away was to make Miss Mathews more impatient to see him. Melissa remained on the bench in deep thought; at last Joey went up to her.

"You here, my boy! what have you come for?" said Melissa.

"I was strolling this way, Madam."

"Come here; I want you to tell me the truth; indeed, it is useless to attempt to deceive me. Is that person your uncle?"

"No, Miss, he is not."

"I knew that. Is he not the person who wrote the letter, and a gentleman in disguise? Answer me that question, and then I have a message to him which will make him happy.

"He is a gentleman, Miss."

"And his name is Spikeman; is it not?"

"Yes, Miss, it is."

"Will he be here this evening? This is no time for trifling."

"If you want him, Miss, I am sure he will."

"Tell him to be sure and come, and not in disguise," said Melissa, bursting into tears. "That's no use, my die is cast," continued she, talking to herself. Joey remained by her side until she removed her hands from her face. "Why do you wait?"

"At what hour, Miss, shall he come?" said Joey.

"As soon as it is dusk. Leave me, boy, and do not forget."

Joey hastened to Spikeman, and narrated what he had seen and heard, with the message of Melissa.

"My dear boy! you have helped me to happiness," said Spikeman. "She shed tears, did she? Poor thing! I trust they will be the last she shall shed. I must be off to Cobhurst at once. Meet me at dark at the copse, for I shall want to speak to you."

Spikeman set off for the town as fast as he could, with his bundle on his head. When half-way he went into a field and changed his clothes, discarding his tinker's dress for ever, throwing it into a ditch for the benefit of the finder. He then went into the town to his rooms, dressed himself in a fashionable suit, arranged his portmanteau, and ordered a chaise to be ready at the door at a certain time, so as to arrive at the village before dusk. After he had passed through the village he ordered the postboy to stop about

fifty yards on the other side of the copse, and, getting out, desired him to remain till he returned. Joey was already there, and soon afterwards Miss M. made her appearance, coming down the walk in a hurried manner, in her shawl and bonnet. As soon as she gained the bench, Spikeman was at her feet; he told her he knew what had passed between her and her cousin; that he could not, would not part with her; he now came without disguise to repeat what he had so often said to her, that he loved and adored her, and that his life should be devoted to make her happy.

Melissa wept, entreated, refused, and half consented; Spikeman led her away from the bench towards the road, she still refusing, yet still advancing, until they came to the door of the chaise. Joey let down the steps; Melissa, half fainting and half resisting, was put in, Spikeman followed, and the door was closed by Joey.

"Stop a moment, boy," said Spikeman. "Here, Joey, take this."

As Spikeman put a packet into our hero's hand, Melissa clasped her hands, and cried, "Yes—yes! stop, do stop, and let me out; I cannot go, indeed I cannot."

"There's lights coming down the gravel walk," said Joey; "they are running fast."

"Drive on, boy, as fast as you can," said Spikeman.

"Oh, yes! drive on," cried Melissa, sinking into her lover's arms.

Off went the chaise, leaving Joey on the road with the packet in his hands; our hero turned round and perceived the lights close to him, and, not exactly wishing to be interrogated, he set off as fast as he could, and never checked his speed until he arrived at the cottage where he and Spikeman had taken up their quarters.

CHAPTER XIII.

A VERY LONG CHAPTER, NECESSARY TO FETCH UP THE REMAINDER OF THE CONVOY.

As it was late that night, Joey did not open the packet delivered to him from Spikeman until he arose the next morning, which he did very early, as he thought it very likely that he might be apprehended, if he was not off in good time. The packet contained a key, £20 in money, and a paper, with the following letter:—

"My dear Boy,—As we must now part, at least for some time, I have left you money sufficient to set you up for the present; I have enclosed a memorandum, by which I make over to you the knife-grinder's wheel, and all

the furniture, books, &c., that are in my rooms at Dudstone, the key of which is also enclosed. I should recommend your going there and taking immediate possession, and as soon as I have time I shall write to the woman of the house, to inform her of the contents of the memorandum; and I will also write to you, and let you know how I get on. Of course you will now do as you please; at all events I have taught you a profession, and have given you the means of following it. I only hope, if you do, that some day you may be able to retire from business as successfully as I have done. You will, of course, write to me occasionally, after you know where I am. Depend upon it there is no profession so near to that of a gentleman as that of a travelling tinker.

"Yours ever truly,

"AUGUSTUS SPIKEMAN.

"N. B. There is some money in the old place to pay the bill at the cottage."

Our hero considered that he could not do better than follow the advice of Spikeman. He first wrote a few lines to Mary, requesting that she would send her answer to Dudstone; and then, having settled with the hostess, he set off with his knife-grinder's wheel on his return home to what were now his apartments. As he was not anxious to make money, he did not delay on his road, and on the fifth day he found himself at the door of the ale-house near to Dudstone, where he had before left the wheel. Joey thought it advisable to do so now, telling the landlord that Spikeman had requested him so to do; and as soon as it was dusk our hero proceeded to the town, and knocked at the door of the house in which were Spikeman's apartments. He informed the landlady that Spikeman would not in all probability return, and had sent him to take possession, showing her the key. The dame was satisfied, and Joey went

up stairs. As soon as he had lighted the candle, and fairly installed himself, our hero threw himself down on the sofa, and began to reflect. It is pleasant to have property of our own, and Joey never had had any before; it was satisfactory to look at the furniture, bed, and books, and say, "All this is *mine*." Joey felt this, as it is to be presumed everybody would in the same position, and for some time he continued looking round and round at his property. Having satisfied himself with a review of it externally, he next proceeded to open all the drawers, the chests, &c. There were many articles in them which Joey did not expect to find, such as a store of sheets, table linen, and all Spikeman's clothes, which he had discarded when he went up to London, some silver spoons, and a variety of little odds and ends; in short, Spikeman had left our hero every thing as it stood. Joey put his money away, and then went to bed,

and slept as serenely as the largest landed proprietor in the kingdom. When he awoke next morning, our hero began to reflect upon what he should do. He was not of Spikeman's opinion that a travelling tinker was the next thing to a gentleman, nor did he much like the idea of rolling the wheel about all his life; nevertheless, he agreed with Spikeman that it was a trade by which he could earn his livelihood, and if he could do no better, it would always be a resource. As soon as he had taken his breakfast, he sat down and wrote to Mary, acquainting her with all that had taken place, and stating what his own feelings were upon his future prospects. Having finished his letter, he dressed himself neatly, and went out to call upon the widow James. Miss Ophelia and Miss Amelia were both at home.

"Well, Master Atherton, how do you do? and pray where is Mr. Spikeman?" said both the girls in a breath.

"He is a long way from this!" replied Joey.

"A long way from this! Why, has he not come back with you?"

"No; and I believe he will not come back any more. I am come, as his agent, to take possession of his property."

"Why, what has happened?"

"A very sad accident," replied our hero, shaking his head; "he fell——"

"Fell!" exclaimed the two girls in a breath.

"Yes, fell in love, and is married."

"Well now!" exclaimed Miss Ophelia, "only to think!"

Miss Amelia said nothing.

"And so he is really married?"

"Yes; and he has given up business."

"He did seem in a great hurry when he last came here," observed Amelia. "And what are you going to do?"

"I am not going to follow his example just yet," replied Joey.

"I suppose not; but what are you going to do?" replied Ophelia.

"I shall wait here for his orders; I expect to hear from him. Whether I am to remain in this part of the country, or sell off and join him, or look out for some other business, I hardly know; I think myself I shall look out for something else; I don't like the cutlery line and travelling for orders. How is your mamma, Miss Ophelia?"

"She is very well, and has gone to market. Well, I never did expect to hear of Mr. Spikeman being married! Who is he married to, Joseph?"

"To a very beautiful young lady, daughter of Squire Mathews, with a large fortune."

"Yes, men always look for money now-a-days," said Amelia.

"I must go now," said Joey, getting up; "I have some calls and some inquiries to make. Good morning, young ladies."

It must be acknowledged that the two Misses James were not quite so cordial towards Joey as they were formerly; but unmarried girls do not like to hear of their old acquaintances marrying anybody save themselves. There is not only a flirt the less, but a chance the less in consequence; and it should be remarked, that there were very few *beaux* at Dudstone. Our hero was some days at Dudstone before he received a letter from Spikeman, who informed him that he had arrived safely at Gretna (indeed, there was no male relation of the family to pursue him), and the silken bands of Hymen had been made more secure by the iron rivets of the blacksmith; that three days after he had written a letter to his wife's father, informing him that he had *done him the honour* of mar-

rying his daughter; that he could not exactly say when he could find time to come to the mansion and pay him a visit, but that he would as soon as he conveniently could; that he begged that the room prepared for them upon their arrival might have a *large* dressing-room attached to it, as he could not dispense with that convenience; that he was not aware whether Mr. Mathews was inclined to part with the mansion and property, but, as his wife had declared that she would prefer living there to anywhere else, he had not any objection to purchase it of Mr. Mathews, if they could come to terms; hoped his gout was better, and was his "very faithfully, AUGUSTUS SPIKEMAN." Melissa wrote a few lines to Araminta, begging her, as a favour, not to attempt to palliate her conduct, but to rail against her incessantly, as it would be the surest method of bringing affairs to an amicable settlement.

To her father she wrote only these few words:—

"My dear Papa,—You will be glad to hear that I am married. Augustus says that, if I behave well, he will come and see you soon. Dear papa, your dutiful child,

"MELISSA SPIKEMAN."

That the letters of Spikeman and Melissa put the old gentleman in no small degree of rage, may be conceived; but nothing could be more judicious than the plan Spikeman had acted upon. It is useless to plead to a man who is irritated with constant gout; he only becomes more despotic and more unyielding. Had Araminta attempted to soften his indignation, it would have been equally fruitless; but the compliance with the request of her cousin, of continually railing against her, had the effect intended. The vituperation of Araminta left him nothing to say; there was no opposition to direct his anathe-

mas against; there was no coaxing or wheedling on the part of the offenders for him to repulse; and when Araminta pressed the old gentleman to vow that Melissa should never enter the doors again, he accused her of being influenced by interested motives, threw a basin at her head, and wrote an epistle requesting Melissa to come and take his blessing. Araminta refused to attend her uncle after this insult, and the old gentleman became still more anxious for the return of his daughter, as he was now left entirely to the caprice of his servants. Araminta gave Melissa an account of what had passed, and entreated her to come at once. She did so, and a general reconciliation took place. Mr. Mathews, finding his new son-in-law very indifferent to pecuniary matters, insisted upon making over to his wife an estate in Herefordshire, which, with Melissa's own fortune, rendered them in most affluent circumstances. Spikeman requested Joey to write to him

now and then, and that, if he required assistance, he would apply for it; but still advised him to follow up the profession of travelling tinker as being the most independent.

Our hero had hardly time to digest the contents of Spikeman's letter when he received a large packet from Mary, accounting for her not having replied to him before, in consequence of her absence from the Hall. She had three weeks before received a letter written for Mrs. Chopper, acquainting her that Mrs. Chopper was so very ill that it was not thought possible that she could recover, having an abscess in the liver which threatened to break internally, and requesting Mary to obtain leave to come to Gravesend, if she possibly could, as Mrs. Chopper wished to see her before she died. Great as was Mary's repugnance to revisit Gravesend, she felt that the obligations she was under to Mrs. Chopper were too great for her to hesitate; and

showing the letter to Mrs. Austin, and stating at the same time that she considered Mrs. Chopper as more than a mother to her, she obtained the leave which she requested, and set off for Gravesend.

It was with feelings of deep shame and humiliation that poor Mary walked down the main street of the town, casting her eyes up fearfully to the scenes of her former life. She was very plainly attired, and had a thick veil over her face, so that nobody recognized her; she arrived at the door of Mrs. Chopper's abode, ascended the stairs, and was once more in the room out of which she had quitted Gravesend to lead a new life; and most conscientiously had she fulfilled her resolution, as the reader must be aware of. Mrs. Chopper was in bed and slumbering when Mary softly opened the door; the signs of approaching death were on her countenance—her large round form had wasted away—her fingers

were now taper and bloodless; Mary would not have recognized her had she fallen in with her under other circumstances. An old woman was in attendance; she rose up when Mary entered, imagining that it was some kind lady come to visit the sick woman. Mary sat down by the side of the bed, and motioned to the old woman that she might go out, and then she raised her veil and waited till the sufferer roused. Mary had snuffed the candle twice that she might see sufficiently to read the Prayer Book which she had taken up, when Mrs. Chopper opened her eyes.

"How very kind of you, Ma'am!" said Mrs. Chopper; "and where is Miss ——? My eyes are dimmer every day."

"It is me, Mary—Nancy, that was!"

"And so it is! O Nancy, now I shall die in peace! I thought at first it was the kind lady who comes every day to read and

to pray with me. Dear Nancy, how glad I am to see you! And how do you do? And how is poor Peter?"

"Quite well when I heard from him last, my dear Mrs. Chopper."

"You don't know, Nancy, what a comfort it is to me to see you looking as you do, so good and so innocent; and when I think it was by my humble means that you were put in the way of becoming so, I feel as if I had done one good act, and that perhaps my sins may be forgiven me."

"God will reward you, Mrs. Chopper; I said so at the time, and I feel it now," replied Mary, the tears rolling down her cheeks; "I trust by your means, and with strength from above, I shall continue in the same path, so that one sinner may be saved."

"Bless you, Nancy!—You never were a bad girl in heart: I always said so. And where is Peter now?"

"Going about the country earning his bread; poor, but happy."

"Well, Nancy, it will soon be over with me; I may die in a second, they tell me, or I may live for three or four days; but I sent for you that I might put my house in order. There are only two people that I care for upon earth—that is you and my poor Peter; and all I have I mean to leave between you. I have signed a paper already, in case you could not come, but now that you are come I will tell you all I wish; but give me some of that drink first."

Mary having read the directions on the label, poured out a wine-glass of the mixture, and gave it to Mrs. Chopper, who swallowed it, and then proceeded, taking a paper from under her pillow—

"Nancy! this is the paper I told you of. I have about £700 in the bank, which is all that I have saved in twenty-two years; but

it has been honestly made. I have, perhaps, much more owing to me, but I do not want it to be collected. Poor sailors have no money to spare, and I release them all. You will see me buried, Nancy, and tell poor Peter how I loved him, and I have left my account books, with my bad debts and good debts, to him. I am sure he would like to have them, for he knows the history of every sum-total, and he will look over them, and think of me. You can sell this furniture; but the wherry you must give to William; he is not very honest, but he has a large family to keep. Do what you like, dearest, about what is here; perhaps my clothes would be useful to his wife; they are not fit for you. There's a good deal of money in the upper drawer; it will pay for my funeral and the doctor. I believe that is all now; but do tell poor Peter how I loved him. Poor fellow, I have been cheated ever since he left; but that's no mat-

ter. Now, Nancy dear, read to me a little. I have so longed to have you by my bed-side to read to me, and pray for me! I want to hear you pray before I die. It will make me happy to hear you pray, and see that kind face looking up to heaven, as it was always meant to do."

Poor Mary burst into tears. After a few minutes she became more composed, and, dropping down on her knees by the side of the bed, she opened the Prayer Book, and complied with the request of Mrs. Chopper; and as she fervently poured forth her supplication, occasionally her voice faltered, and she would stop to brush away the tears which dimmed her sight. She was still so occupied when the door of the room was gently opened, and a lady, with a girl about fourteen or fifteen years old, quietly entered the room. Mary did not perceive them until they also had knelt down. She finished the prayer,

rose, and, with a short curtsey, retired from the side of the bed.

Although not recognized herself by the lady, Mary immediately remembered Mrs. Phillips and her daughter Emma, having, as we have before observed, been at one time in Mrs. Phillips's service.

"This is the young woman whom you so wished to see, Mrs. Chopper; is it not?" said Mrs. Phillips. "I am not surprised at your longing for her, for she appears well suited for a companion in such an hour; and, alas! how few there are! Sit down, I request," continued Mrs. Phillips, turning to Mary. "How do you find yourself to-day, Mrs. Chopper?"

"Sinking fast, dear Madam, but not unwilling to go, since I have seen Nancy, and heard of my poor Peter; he wrote to Nancy a short time ago. Nancy, don't forget my love to Peter."

Emma Phillips, who had now grown tall and thin, immediately went up to Mary, and said, "Peter was the little boy who was with Mrs. Chopper; I met him on the road when he first came to Gravesend, did I not?"

"Yes, Miss, you did," replied Mary.

"He used to come to our house sometimes, and very often to meet me as I walked home from school. I never could imagine what became of him, for he disappeared all at once without saying good-bye."

"He was obliged to go away, Miss. It was not his fault; he was a very good boy, and is so still."

"Then pray remember me to him, and tell him that I often think of him."

"I will, Miss Phillips, and he will be very happy to hear that you have said so."

"How did you know that my name was Phillips; O, I suppose poor Mrs. Chopper told you before we came?"

Mrs. Phillips had now read some time to Mrs. Chopper, and this put an end to the conversation between Mary and Emma Phillips. It was not resumed. As soon as the reading was over, Mrs. Phillips and her daughter took their leave.

Mary made up a bed for herself by the side of Mrs. Chopper's. About the middle of the night, she was roused by a gurgling kind of noise; she hastened to the bed-side, and found that Mrs. Chopper was suffocating. Mary called in the old woman to her aid, but it was useless, the abscess had burst, and in a few seconds all was over; and Mary, struggling with emotion, closed the eyes of her old friend, and offered up a prayer for her departed spirit.

The remainder of the night was passed in solemn meditation and a renewal of those vows which the poor girl had hitherto so scrupulously adhered to, and which the death-bed

scene was so well fitted to encourage; but Mary felt that she had her duties towards others to discharge, and did not give way to useless and unavailing sorrow. It was her duty to return as soon as possible to her indulgent mistress, and the next morning she was busy in making the necessary arrangements. On the third day Mary attended the funeral of her old friend, the bills were all paid, and having selected some articles which she wished to retain as a remembrance, she resolved to make over to William, the waterman, not only the wherry, but all the stock in hand, furniture, and clothes of Mrs. Chopper. This would enable him and his wife to set up in business themselves and provide for their family. Mary knew that she had no right to do so without Joey's consent, but of this she felt she was sure; having so done, she had nothing more to do but to see the lawyer who had drawn up the will, and having gone

through the necessary forms, she received an order on the county bank nearest to the Hall for the money, which, with what was left in the drawers, after paying every demand, amounted to more than £700. She thought it was her duty to call upon Mrs. Phillips, before she went away, out of gratitude for her kindness to Mrs. Chopper; and as she had not been recognized, she had no scruple in so doing. She was kindly received, and blushed at the praise bestowed upon her. As she was going away Emma Phillips followed her out, and putting into her hand a silver pencil-case, requested she would "give it to Peter as a remembrance of his little friend, Emma." The next day Mary arrived at the Hall, first communicated to Mrs. Austin what had occurred, and then, having received our hero's two last epistles, sat down to write the packet containing all the intelligence we have made known, and ended by requesting Joey to set

off with his knife-grinder's wheel, and come to the village near to the Hall, that he might receive his share of Mrs. Chopper's money, the silver pencil-case, and the warm greeting of his adopted sister. Joey was not long in deciding. He resolved that he would go to Mary; and, having locked up his apartments, he once more resumed his wheel, and was soon on his way to Hampshire.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RETROSPECT, THAT THE PARTIES MAY ALL START FAIR AGAIN.

We must now leave our hero on his way to the Hall, while we acquaint our readers with the movements of other parties connected with our history. A correspondence had been kept up between O'Donahue and M'Shane. O'Donahue had succeeded in obtaining the pardon of the Emperor, and employment in the Russian army, in which he had rapidly risen to the rank of general. Five or six years had elapsed since he had married, and both O'Donahue and his wife were anxious to visit England; a letter at last came, an-

nouncing that he had obtained leave of absence from the Emperor, and would, in all probability, arrive in the ensuing spring.

During this period M'Shane had continued at his old quarters, Mrs. M'Shane still carrying on the business, which every year became more lucrative; so much so, indeed, that her husband had for some time thought very seriously of retiring altogether, as they had already amassed a large sum, when M'Shane received the letter from O'Donahue, announcing that in a few months he would arrive in England. Major M'Shane, who was very far from being satisfied with his negative position in society, pressed the matter more earnestly to his wife, who, although she was perfectly content with her own position, did not oppose his entreaties. M'Shane found that after disposing of the good-will of the business, and the house, they would have a clear £30,000, which he considered more

than enough for their wants, unencumbered as they were with children.

Let it not be supposed that M'Shane had ceased in his inquiries after our hero; on the contrary, he had resorted to all that his invention could suggest to trace him out, but, as the reader must be aware, without success. Both M'Shane and his wife mourned his loss, as if they had been bereaved of their own child; they still indulged the idea that some day he would re-appear, but when, they could not surmise. M'Shane had not only searched for our hero, but had traced his father with as little success, and he had now made up his mind that he should see no more of Joey, if he ever did see him again, until after the death of his father, when there would no longer be any occasion for secrecy. Our hero and his fate were a continual source of conversation between M'Shane and his wife; but latterly, after not having heard of him for

more than five years, the subject had not been so often renewed. As soon as M'Shane had wound up his affairs, and taken his leave of the eating-house, he looked out for an estate in the country, resolving to lay out two-thirds of his money in land, and leave the remainder in the funds. After about three months' search, he found a property which suited him, and, as it so happened, about six miles from the domains held by Mr. Austin. He had taken possession and furnished it. As a retired officer in the army he was well received; and if Mrs. M'Shane was sometimes laughed at for her housekeeper-like appearance, still her sweetness of temper and unassuming behaviour soon won her friends, and M'Shane found himself in a very short time comfortable and happy. The O'Donahues were expected to arrive very shortly, and M'Shane had now a domicile fit for the reception of his old friend, who had pro-

mised to pay him a visit as soon as he arrived.

Of the Austins little more can be said that has not been said already. Austin was a miserable, unhappy man; his cup of bliss—for he had every means of procuring all that this world considers as bliss, being in possession, of station, wealth, and respect — was poisoned by the one heavy crime which passion had urged him to commit, and which was now a source of hourly and unavailing repentance. His son, who should have inherited his wealth, was lost to him, and he dared not mention that he was in existence. Every day Austin became more nervous and irritable, more exclusive and averse to society; he trembled at shadows, and his strong constitution was rapidly giving way to the heavy weight on his conscience. He could not sleep without opiates, and he dreaded to sleep lest he should reveal every thing of the past in

his slumbers. Each year added to the irascibility of his temper, and the harshness with which he treated his servants and his unhappy wife. His chief amusement was hunting, and he rode in so reckless a manner that people often thought that he was anxious to break his neck. Perhaps he was. Mrs. Austin was much to be pitied; she knew how much her husband suffered; how the worm gnawed within; and, having that knowledge, she submitted to all his harshness, pitying him instead of condemning him; but her life was still more embittered by the loss of her child, and many were the bitter tears which she would shed when alone, for she dared not in her husband's presence, as he would have taken them as a reproof to himself. Her whole soul yearned after our hero, and that one feeling rendered her indifferent, not only to all the worldly advantages by which she was sur-

rounded, but to the unkindness and hard-heartedness of her husband. Mary, who had entered her service as kitchen-maid, was very soon a favourite, and had been advanced to the situation of Mrs. Austin's own attendant. Mrs. Austin considered her a treasure, and she daily became more partial to and more confidential with her. Such was the state of affairs, when one morning, as Austin was riding to cover, a gentleman of the neighbourhood said to him in the course of conversation—

"By-the-bye, Austin, have you heard that you have a new neighbour?"

"What! on the Frampton estate, I suppose? I heard that it had been sold."

"Yes; I have seen him. He is one of your profession—a lively, amusing sort of Irish major; gentlemanlike, nevertheless. The wife not very high-bred, but very fat, and

very good-humoured, and amusing from her downright simpleness of heart. You will call upon them, I presume?"

"O, of course," replied Austin. "What is his name, did you say?"

"Major M'Shane, formerly of the 53rd regiment, I believe."

Had a bullet passed through the heart of Austin he could not have received a more sudden shock, and the start which he made from his saddle attracted the notice of his companion.

"What's the matter, Austin, you look pale, you are not well?"

"No," replied Austin, recollecting himself, "I am not; one of those twinges from an old wound in the breast came on. I shall be better directly."

Austin stopped his horse, and put his hand to his heart. His companion rode up and remained near him.

"It is worse than usual; I thought it was coming on last night; I fear that I must go home."

"Shall I go with you?"

"O no; I must not spoil your sport. I am better now a great deal; it is going off fast. Come, let us proceed, or we shall be too late at cover."

Austin had resolved to conquer his feelings. His friend had no suspicion, it is true; but, when we are guilty, we imagine that everybody suspects us. They rode a few minutes in silence.

"Well, I am glad that you did not go home," observed his friend; "for you will meet your new neighbour; he has subscribed to the pack, and they say he is well mounted; we shall see how he rides."

Austin made no reply; but, after riding on a few yards further, he pulled up, saying that the pain was coming on again, and that he

could not proceed. His companion expressed his sorrow at Austin's indisposition, and they separated.

Austin immediately returned home, dismounted his horse, and hastened to his private sitting-room. Mrs. Austin, who had seen him return and could not imagine the cause, went in to her husband.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said Mrs. Austin.

"Matter!" replied Austin, bitterly, pacing up and down the room; "heaven and hell conspire against us!"

"Dear Austin, don't talk in that way. What has happened?"

"Something which will compel me, I expect, to remain a prisoner in my own house, or lead to something unpleasant. We must not stay here."

Austin then threw himself down on a sofa, and was silent. At last the persuasions and

endearments of his wife overcame his humour. He told her that M'Shane was the major of his regiment when he was a private; that he would inevitably recognize him; and that, if nothing else occurred from M'Shane's knowledge of his former name, at all events the general supposition of his having been an officer in the army would be contradicted, and it would lower him in the estimation of the county gentlemen.

"It is indeed a very annoying circumstance, my dear Austin; but are you sure that he would, after so long a period, recognize the private soldier in the gentleman of fortune?"

"As sure as I sit here," replied Austin, gloomily; "I wish I were dead."

"Don't say so, dear Austin, it makes me miserable."

"I never am otherwise," replied Austin, clasping his hands. "God forgive me;

I have sinned, but have I not been punished?"

"You have, indeed; and as repentance is availing, my dear husband, you will receive God's mercy."

"The greatest boon, the greatest mercy would be death," replied the unhappy man; "I envy the pedlar."

Mrs. Austin wept. Her husband, irritated at tears, which, to him, seemed to imply reproach, sternly ordered her to leave the room.

That Austin repented bitterly of the crime which he had committed is not to be doubted; but it was not with the subdued soul of a Christian. His pride was continually struggling within him, and was not yet conquered; this it was that made him alternately self-condemning and irascible, and it was the continual warfare in his soul which was undermining his constitution.

Austin sent for medical advice for his supposed complaint. The country practitioner, who could discover nothing, pronounced it to be an affection of the heart. He was not far wrong; and Mr. Austin's illness was generally promulgated. Cards and calls were the consequence, and Austin kept himself a close but impatient prisoner in his own house. His hunters remained in the stables, his dogs in the kennel, and every one intimated that Mr. Austin was labouring under a disease from which he would not recover. At first this was extremely irksome to Austin, and he was very impatient; but gradually he became reconciled, and even preferred his sedentary and solitary existence. Books were his chief amusement, but nothing could minister to a mind diseased, or drive out the rooted memory of the brain. Austin became more morose and misanthropic every

day, and at last would permit no one to come near him but his valet and his wife.

Such was the position of his parents, when Joey was proceeding to their abode.

CHAPTER XV.

OUR HERO FALLS IN WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE, AND IS NOT VERY MUCH DELIGHTED.

We left our hero rolling his knife-grinder's wheel toward's his father's house. It must be confessed that he did it very unwillingly. He was never very fond of it at any time; but, since he had taken possession of Spikeman's property, and had received from Mary the intelligence that he was worth £350 more, he had taken a positive aversion to it. It retarded his movements, and it was hard work when he had not to get his livelihood by it. More than once he thought of rolling

it into a horsepond, and leaving it below low-water mark; but then he thought it a sort of protection against inquiry, and against assault, for it told of poverty and honest employment; so Joey rolled on, but not with any feelings of regard towards his companion.

How many castles did our hero build as he went along the road! The sum of money left to him appeared to be enormous. He planned and planned again; and, like most people, at the close of the day, he was just as undertermined as at the commencement. Nevertheless, he was very happy, as people always are, in anticipation; unfortunately, more so than when they grasp what they have been seeking. Time rolled on, as well as the grindstone, and at last Joey found himself at the ale-house where he and Mary had put up previously to her obtaining a situation at the Hall. He immediately wrote a letter to her, acquainting her with his arrival. He would

have taken the letter himself, only he recollected the treatment he had received, and found another messenger in the butcher's boy, who was going up to the Hall for orders. The answer returned by the same party was, that Mary would come down and see him that evening. When Mary came down Joey was astonished at the improvement in her appearance. She looked much younger than she did when they had parted, and her dress was so very different, that our hero could with difficulty imagine that it was the same person who had been his companion from Gravesend. The careless air and manner had disappeared; there was a *retenue*—a dignity about her which astonished him; and he felt a sort of respect mingled with his regard, for her, of which he could not divest himself. But, if she looked younger (as may well be imagined) from her change of life, she also looked more sedate, except when she smiled, or when oc-

casionally, but very rarely, her merry laughter reminded him of the careless, good-tempered Nancy of former times. That the greeting was warm need hardly be said. It was the greeting of a sister and younger brother who loved each other dearly.

"You are very much grown, Joey," said Mary. "Dear boy, how happy I am to see you!"

"And you, Mary, you're younger in the face, but older in your manners. Are you as happy in your situation as you have told me in your letters?"

"Quite happy; more happy than ever I deserve to be, my dear boy; and now tell me, Joey, what do you think of doing? You have now the means of establishing yourself."

"Yes, I have been thinking of it; but I don't know what to do."

"Well, you must look out, and do not be in too great a hurry. Recollect, Joey, that if

any thing offers which you have any reason to believe will suit you, you shall have my money as well as your own."

"Nay, Mary, why should I take that?"

"Because, as it is of no use to me, it must be idle; besides, you know, if you succeed, you will be able to pay me interest for it; so I shall gain as well as you. You must not refuse your sister, my dear boy."

"Dear Mary, how I wish we could live in the same house!"

"That cannot be now, Joey; you are above my situation at the hall, even allowing that you would ever enter it."

"That I never will, if I can help it; not that I feel angry now, but I like to be independent."

"Of course you do."

"And as for that grindstone, I hate the sight of it; it has made Spikeman's fortune, but it never shall make mine."

"You don't agree, then, with your former companion," rejoined Mary, "that a tinker's is the nearest profession to that of a gentleman which you know of."

"I certainly do not," replied our hero; "and as soon as I can get rid of it I will; I have rolled it here, but I will not roll it much farther. I only wish I knew where to go."

"I have something in my pocket which puts me in mind of a piece of news which I received the other day, since my return. First, let me give you what I have in my pocket"—and Mary pulled out the pencil-case sent to Joey by Emma Phillips, "There, you know already who that is from."

"Yes, and I shall value it very much, for she was a dear, kind little creature; and when I was very, very miserable, she comforted me."

"Well, Joey, Miss Phillips requested me to write when I came back, as she wished to

hear that I had arrived safe at the Hall. It was very kind of her, and I did so, of course. Since that I have received a letter from her, stating that her grandmother is dead, and that her mother is going to quit Gravesend for Portsmouth, to reside with her brother, who is now a widower."

"I will go to Portsmouth," replied our hero.

"I was thinking that, as her brother is a navy-agent, and Mrs. Phillips is interested about you, you could not do better. If any thing turns up, then you will have good advice, and your money is not so likely to be thrown away. I think, therefore, you had better go to Portsmouth, and try your fortune."

"I am very glad you have mentioned this, Mary, for, till now, one place was as indifferent to me as another; but now it is otherwise, and to Portsmouth I will certainly go."

Our hero remained two or three days longer at the village, during which time Mary was with him every evening, and once she obtained leave to go to the banker's about her money. She then turned over to Joey's account the sum due to him, and arrangements were made with the bank so that Joey could draw his capital out whenever he pleased. After which our hero took leave of Mary, promising to correspond more freely than before; and once more putting the strap of his knife-grinder's wheel over his shoulders, he set off on his journey to Portsmouth.

Joey had not gained two miles from the village when he asked himself the question, "What shall I do with my grindstone?" He did not like to leave it on the road; he did not know to whom he could give it away. He rolled it on for about six miles farther, and then, quite tired, he resolved to follow the plan formerly adopted by Spikeman, and

repose a little upon the turf on the road-side. The sun was very warm, and after a time Joey retreated to the other side of the hedge, which was shaded; and, having taken his bundle from the side of the wheel where it hung, he first made his dinner of the provender he had brought with him, and then, laying his head on the bundle, was soon in a sound sleep, from which he was awakened by hearing voices on the other side of the hedge. He turned round, and perceived two men on the side of the road, close to his knife-grinder's wheel. They were in their shirts and trousers only, and sitting down on the turf.

"It would be a very good plan," observed one of them; "we should then travel without suspicion."

"Yes; if we could get off with it without being discovered. Where can the owner of it be?"

"Well, I dare say he is away upon some

business or another, and has left the wheel here till he comes back. Now, suppose we were to take it—how should we manage?"

"Why, we cannot go along this road with it. We must get over the gates and hedges till we get across the country into another road; and then, by travelling all night, we might be quite clear."

"Yes, and then we should do well; for even if our description as deserters was sent out from Portsmouth, we should be considered as travelling tinkers, and there would be no suspicion."

"Well, I'm ready for it. If we can only get it off the road, and conceal it till night, we may then easily manage it. But first let's see if the fellow it belongs to may not be somewhere about here."

As the man said this he rose up and turned his face towards the hedge, and our hero immediately perceived that it was his old ac-

quaintance, Furness, the schoolmaster and marine. What to do he hardly knew. At last he perceived Furness advancing towards the gate of the field, which was close to where he was lying, and, as escape was impossible, our hero covered his face with his arms, and pretended to be fast asleep. He soon heard a "Hush!" given, as a signal to the other man, and, after a while, footsteps close to him. Joey pretended to snore loudly, and a whispering then took place. At last he heard Furness say—

"Do you watch by him while I wheel away the grindstone."

"But, if he wakes, what shall I do?"

"Brain him with that big stone. If he does not wake up when I am past the second field follow me."

That our hero had no inclination to wake after this notice may be easily imagined; he heard the gate opened, and the wheel trundled

away, much to his delight, as Furness was the party who had it in charge; and Joey continued to snore hard, until at last he heard the departing footsteps of Furness's comrade, who had watched him. He thought it prudent to continue motionless for some time longer, to give them time to be well away from him, and then he gradually turned round and looked in the direction in which they had gone; he could see nothing of them, and it was not until he had risen up, and climbed up on the gate, that he perceived them two or three fields off, running away at a rapid pace. Thanking heaven that he had escaped the danger that he was in, and delighted with the loss of his property, our hero recommenced his journey with his bundle over his shoulder, and before night he was safe outside one of the stages, which took him to a town from which there was another which would carry him to Portsmouth, at which

sea-port he arrived the next evening without further adventure.

As our hero sat on the outside of the coach and reflected upon his last adventure, the more he felt he had reason to congratulate himself. That Furness had deserted from the Marine Barracks at Portsmouth was evident; and if he had not, that he would have recognised Joey some time or other was almost certain. Now, he felt sure that he was safe at Portsmouth, as it would be the last place at which Furness would make his appearance; and he also felt that his knife-grinder's wheel, in supplying Furness with the ostensible means of livelihood, and thereby preventing his being taken up as a deserter, had proved the best friend to him, and could not have been disposed of better. Another piece of good fortune was his having secured his bundle and money; for had he left it with the wheel, it would have, of course,

shared its fate. "Besides," thought Joey, "if I should chance to fall in with Furness again, and he attempts to approach me, I can threaten to have him taken as a deserter, and this may deter him from so doing." It was with a grateful heart that our hero laid his head upon his pillow, in the humble inn at which he had taken up his quarters.

END OF VOL. II.

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